

This volume illuminates the degree of influence of Marxism in the United States prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. The book opens with an examination of Marx's own expressions of interest in and concern about developments in the United States.

The remaining chapters show the relationship of Marxian thought and of Marxists to political activity, legislative achievements, labor unions, the women's rights movement, the struggle against racism, and Marxian influence upon religion, literature, art and science. A section on political cartooning features reproductions of contemporary work. The documentation throughout is thorough.

This is the first book on a subject of great historical interest and clear contemporary relevance. Dr. Johnson, now retired from teaching, has published a biography of Charles E. Ruthenberg, an early socialist and one of the founders of the Communist Party, U.S.A.; a study of Robert Owen's influence upon and visit to the United States; and edited the recollections of Bertha W. Howe, a pioneer advocate of women's rights.

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*Marxism  
In  
United States History  
Before the Russian Revolution  
(1876-1917)*

*Oakley C. Johnson*

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To Mary O. & Mary Lea

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Previously, most of my research was done at three libraries, and I want to thank each one by name: First, the Tamiment Library, now owned by New York University, but originally the library founded by Alexander Trachtenberg at the Rand School of Social Science, and still located at Seven East Fifteenth Street, New York City. Its chief librarian, Dorothy Swanson, knew everything and unearthed everything that I asked for. Second, the Labadie Collection, founded by my old friend, Jo Labadie, the “gentle anarchist,” through his gift of books and papers to the University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, while I was still a student there. Its curator, Edward Weber, helped me immeasurably, not only while I worked there in the Summer of 1966, but by mail in the intervening years. Third, the New York Public Library, which has an astonishing accumulation of pamphlets and papers, a considerable number of which were gifts, years ago, from Friedrich Adolph Sorge, last secretary of the First International. The Library also has, to serve its vast public, a staff of kindly and efficient workers.

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Oakley C. Johnson  
December, 1972



## PREFACE

In this book I seek to answer the question: What was the role of Marxism in this country before any socialist state existed, when Socialism was only a theory and a hope?

I do not want to exaggerate, for it is obvious that Marxism was not dominant here, otherwise we would already have socialism. Rather, my thesis is that Marxism, although a minor factor in our history, was nonetheless a significant one, worth studying and evaluating. Furthermore, it was in every instance an influence on the side of progress.

I am using a compartmentalized approach, trying to measure the impact of Marxism on our politics, trade unions, art and literature, on such movements as that for woman suffrage and for full Negro freedom, on the churches, on reform legislation, on general culture and social ideals. I am also attempting to indicate the extent of Marxist influence on various segments of the population and in the farthest stretches of United States territory.

The introductory chapter on Karl Marx pictures his important personal influence here before, during and after the Civil War, and the writings by him which first received publication in the United States. From then on, the book traces the organized socialist movement. It deals with the achievements and aspirations of the Workingmen's Party of the United States, which became the Socialist Labor Party, from 1876 onwards, of the Socialist Party from 1900 onwards, of the many trade unions with socialist leadership. The chapter on legislation indicates how Marxist influence was important in securing labor and social reforms and political freedoms. The chapter on the church takes up the fascinating story of Christian ministers like George D. Herron, Charles H. Vail, Bouck White, Bishop Franklin Spencer Spalding, Bishop William Montgomery Brown, and Albert Rhys Williams. In literature and art, similarly. And so with the other sections; documented.

The impact of Marxism upon immigrant groups, prior to 1917, was considerable. This was notably true among Spanish-speaking, Slavic, Finnish, Germanic and Jewish peoples. Some indication of this appears in the pages that follow; actually, however, this is a story that requires and merits—though it does not yet have—a book all its own.

At the close I have a brief epilogue on the growth of these Marxist roots into the international Marxism-Leninism that followed.

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# I

## *Karl Marx and the United States*

Karl Marx died in 1883, and his friend and collaborator Frederick Engels spoke the farewell words at his grave: "On the afternoon of the 14th of March at a quarter to three," Engels began, "the greatest living thinker ceased to think."

In this address, Engels summed up what Marx meant for mankind. It contained high praise for the founder of scientific socialism, but not too high for that time, nor for ours. Two billion people today revere Marx's name, and honor his achievements.

Three times in this brief speech Engels connected Marx with the United States. He said the death of Marx was a loss to "the fighting European and American proletariat"—and we recall, as we read, that the workers of this country were indeed fighting in the 1880's for the eight-hour day. Engels referred next to Marx's great journalistic contributions, beginning with "the first *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842" and ending with "the *New York Tribune* from 1852 to 1861." In his conclusion Engels again spoke of the workers' loss: Marx, he said, was "loved and mourned by millions of revolutionary workers from the Siberian mines over Europe and America to the coasts of California."

Marx did take an active interest in the United States. It is not too much to say that, next to Germany, where he was born, and England, in which he lived most of his life and where he is buried, his greatest attention all his adult life was given to this country.

When he was twenty-six years old, and still defining and developing his philosophic views and methods, he made a notable statement in a polemic about social questions against a now-forgotten writer named Karl Heinzen. The subject of the polemic is not important here, but the heart of it was that Heinzen thought Communists were narrow-minded for continu-

ing their struggle against the bourgeoisie even after the overthrow of the monarchy, as in France. Why, he asked, in effect, did Marx and Engels attack the kind German *capitalists*!

Writing in *Vorwärts* (1844), a German paper published in Paris, Marx stated in the course of his remarks: "Socialism and Communism did not originate in Germany, but in England, France and North America. The first appearance of a really active Communist Party may be placed within the period of the bourgeois revolution, at the moment when constitutional monarchy was abolished."

What did Marx mean by listing "North America" as a place where communism "originated"? This was four years before he and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. It is clear that Marx was not yet thinking of modern or scientific socialism. He was thinking of the communism of the Utopians, who did in fact originate the idea of socialization of property in the hope of solving the problems of poverty and crime. Claude St. Simon, philosopher, and Francois Fourier, sociologist, in France and Robert Owen, manufacturer and philanthropist, in England, were the originators of this early socialist theory, and the plans outlined by both Fourier and Owen were extensively tried out in the United States. Marx was right in thus singling out the three countries, including our own, as the homelands of elementary socialist theory.

It is important to go more deeply into the American contribution.

Robert Owen himself came to the United States during the administration of James Monroe to launch his experiment at New Harmony, Indiana. He was greeted with respect and even acclaim. He twice addressed a joint session of the United States Congress on the subject of socialism, which he called a "New System of Society." The first speech was on February 25, 1825, and the second, March 7.

"It is therefore, no light duty that is about to devolve on those who are to direct the affairs of this extensive empire," Owen told the senators and representatives, and the president and his cabinet who were assembled with the Congress. "For the time is come, when they will have to decide, whether ignorance and poverty, and disunion, and counteraction, and deception, and imbecility, shall continue to inflict their miseries upon its subjects, or whether affluence, and intelligence, and union and good feeling, and the most open sincerity, in all things, shall change the condition of this population, and give continually increasing prosperity to all the states, and secure happiness to every individual within them."

The first of these two lectures by Owen was arranged by Henry Clay, Speaker of the House; the second by President-Elect John Quincy Adams. Shortly afterward Owen visited Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, and James Madison at Montpelier and was cordially received by both. It is

significant that Owen let it be known that he wanted to extend his "New System," eventually, "to the blacks and the Indians."

As he spoke, Owen's settlement at New Harmony was already under way, and it managed to survive a few years despite its inner faults and its outer capitalist encirclement. Its achievements in advancing educational techniques and ideals were particularly notable.

Engels described Owen as "a man of almost sublime, childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men." He had already, before coming to America, tried out his socialist plans in Manchester, England, and New Lanark, Scotland. He was able to improve the character of thousands of the town's population, Engels adds, "simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings." Owen was the founder of "infant schools," as then called, predecessors of our modern nursery schools and kindergartens. His educational plans were carried out still more extensively at New Harmony. Our country can be proud that it supplied opportunity for Owen's project.

Some fifteen years later the utopian socialism of Fourier, the French thinker, found powerful advocates in the United States. Albert Brisbane, noted newspaper man, became a follower of Fourier and introduced the latter's ideas into the United States in 1840 through his essay, *Social Destiny of Man*. In 1842 Brisbane also published a socialist column in the New York *Tribune*, with Horace Greeley's blessing—in the same paper that ten years later was to carry articles by Marx.

"We assert, and will prove," Brisbane declared in *Social Destiny Of Man*, "that Labor, which is now monotonous, repugnant and degrading, can be ennobled, elevated and made honorable;—or in other words, that Industry can be rendered attractive." He challenged the reader: "Have not the human race some higher Social Destiny to attain than the state in which they now vegetate? Are not some great ameliorations possible? . . . The present is doubt, and the future is blank." In short, he contended, the social structure under which the people lived was "a miserable system of waste and poverty."

In the same year Orestes Brownson, editor of the Boston *Quarterly Review*, and an advocate of the ideas of the other French utopian, St. Simon, started to write a review of Carlyle's *Essay on Chartism*, and ended up with a veritable manifesto on *The Laboring Classes*. He urged: ". . . we must destroy the power of the Banks over the government, and place the government in the hands of the laboring classes themselves, or in the hands of those, if such there be, who have an identity of interest with them."

In 1844, Parke Godwin, son-in-law and biographer of William Cullen Bryant and a writer on Bryant's paper, the New York *Evening Post*—and,



like Brisbane, a Fourierist—produced the notable work, *Democracy, Constructive and Pacific*. Godwin ably criticized the shortcomings of American society. One of the chapter headings was: “The Revolutionary Work Finished, the Democratic Work Hardly Begun.” He denounced the “Division of Society into Classes—One, Possessing All, the Other Nothing.”

Alongside this intellectual ferment went the organizing activities of George Ripley, radical Congregational pastor, co-editor with Charles A. Dana of the *New American Cyclopaedia* (to which Marx later was a contributor), who founded Brook Farm in 1841. Brook Farm was a utopian socialist venture along the line of the Fourierism advocated by Brisbane and Godwin. It won the admiration and to some extent the support of most of the intelligentsia of the period. Among its more than one hundred members were Charles A. Dana, who later became an editor of the New York *Tribune* and visited Karl Marx in Europe. Another member was Nathaniel Hawthorne; others who were friendly but not actual members of the community were Margaret Fuller, editor of *The Dial*, Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, chief intellectual leader of his time.

These sketchy references are enough to show how socialism and communism “originated” in part—as the younger Marx said—in “North America.” There were scores of other communistic communities in the United States in the first half of the 19th Century, including one in Texas led by the ex-Jacobin, Etienne Cabet. They were a part of the broad fight-back against capitalism, a fight-back which included the organization of labor unions and of strikes for a living wage. Viewed historically, they were a preparation for scientific socialism, that is, for Marxism.

But—what is Marxism?

✎ Marxism is, first of all, the teaching of Karl Marx; but it is more than that, for Engels collaborated with Marx, and his independently written works are a part of the body of teaching that we call Marxism, along with Marx’s works and those written jointly by the two men. But here, too, we must note that Marxism is a teaching that is not theory alone, but a merging of theory and practice: Marx’s teaching has to do with changing the world, and the Marxist must act as well as understand. And yet again we must correct ourselves: Marxism is a growing science, and as it is studied and applied in different times and circumstances, its content expands; great leaders like Lenin come, and others arise in Asia, the United States, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere, who interpret Marxism anew and bring it to bear under ever varying conditions and places.

Marxism is not, and has never been claimed to be, the invention of Marx alone. Lenin, who has given the best short summary of it, describes it as the continuation and union of “the three ideological currents of the

nineteenth century, represented by the three most advanced countries of humanity: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrine.”

The first was Hegel’s method of dialectics, which Marx combined with materialism, then illustrated from history and used to study society and to organize social improvement. Marx called this dialectical materialism.

The second was the study of capitalist industry and the capitalist market, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo carried on in their work on political economy, along with the labor theory of value that they elaborated, all of which Marx examined thoroughly in his *Critique of Political Economy* and in his three-volume *Capital*, and in so doing added to the labor theory the concept of *surplus value* which reveals where profits come from and how the rich exploit the poor who work for them.

The third consisted of the strong democratic currents in French history, beginning with the Encyclopedists such as Diderot, nonconformists such as Voltaire, and leaders of the French Revolution such as Robespierre, culminating in the great utopian socialist thinkers, St. Simon and Fourier.

French bourgeois historians—notably Francois Guizot and Augustine Thierry—held that class struggles were the dominant sources of change in their country. Marx, using a dialectical approach to the interpretation of all history, incorporated this concept of class struggle as a corner-stone of his teaching. Thus “class struggle” was originally a matter of capitalist, rather than socialist, theory.

As a matter of fact, Marx could (but apparently didn’t) have gotten the class struggle idea from our own James Madison, who, like Guizot and Thierry, was well aware of it. As American radicals have often noted, Madison wrote in *The Federalist*—long before the *Communist Manifesto* appeared—that “those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society.” Incidentally, the first one to call attention to Madison’s statement—so far as I know—was Daniel De Leon, in the *Nationalist* of August, 1889.

We cannot leave the theme of sources of Marxism without reference to the American anthropologist, Lewis H. Morgan, and his book, *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*, published in New York and London by Macmillan in 1877. Engels tells us that Marx “had made it one of his future tasks to present the results of Morgan’s researches in the light of the conclusions of his own—within certain limits, I may say *our*—materialistic examination of history, and thus to make clear their full significance.” Marx never got around to doing this book, but he left notes of his plan for it. Using these, Engels wrote his notable *Origin of the Family*,

*Private Property and the State in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*, published in 1884.

In acknowledging all these sources, however, it would be wrong not to point out that Marx and Engels immeasurably enriched the ideas thus provided by other thinkers.

Finally, Marxism from the very first meant the organizing of the working class, internationally in the First International, and nationally in political parties. This follows from the essential union of theory with practice that Marxism insists upon; it holds that it is the mission of the organized working class to establish socialism, which will then evolve into full communism.

Marx began writing about the United States while still in Germany, and did still more of it during his successive exiles in France, Belgium, and England. In working out his theory of the state and private property, he took account—among other things—of the right to vote, and of abolition of a property qualification for that right, “in many cases of the North American States,” as Franz Mehring’s biography of Marx reports.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels indicate that Communists would support other working class political movements “for the attainment of immediate aims,” naming among others the “Young Agrarians in America.” The latter was a movement of New York State farmers who struggled against high rents and for agrarian reform.

An English translation of the *Communist Manifesto*, as Engels observes in a prefatory note, appeared in the United States in 1872 in *Woodhull and Claflin’s Weekly*, a New York paper.

In the same year (1848) that first saw publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, while Marx was leading the democratic associations in Cologne, Germany, he was visited by the two outstanding American journalists referred to above, Albert Brisbane and Charles A. Dana. Brisbane reported afterward: “I saw Karl Marx, the leader of the people’s movement . . . He was a man in the thirties with a squat powerful body, a fine face and thick black hair. His features indicated great energy and behind his moderation and reserve one could detect the passionate fire of a daring spirit.”

What Dana thought may be judged from the fact that later—while Marx lived in exile in London—he invited Marx to be a regular contributor to Horace Greeley’s New York *Tribune*, and Marx accepted—an agreement that continued for nearly a decade. A pamphlet by Marx entitled *Herr Vogt*, in which he defended himself against now forgotten slanders spread by this Vogt, contained, as it happens, a copy of a letter from Dana complimenting Marx on his contribution to the *Tribune*.

Marx’s *Tribune* articles began in 1852. In the preceding autumn one of

his close friends and followers, Joseph Weydemeyer, emigrated to the United States, and among other activities served as Marx’s literary agent. Weydemeyer himself set up a German-language monthly, *Die Revolution*, and to it Marx contributed one of his most important historical writings, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852), which thus received its first publication in the United States. (This work, written in German, also made its English premiere in this country, more than four decades later, when Daniel De Leon published it serially in *The People*, Socialist Labor Party periodical.)

Marx also published in other German-American papers in the 1850’s: *The New England Zeitung*, Boston, in which appeared his account of the trial of the Cologne Communists; the *New-Yorker Belletristische Journal und Criminal-Zeitung*; and the New York *Turn-Zeitung*, in which Weydemeyer republished Engels’ *Peasant War in Germany*. Besides the New York *Tribune*, Marx’s ideas also became known through other English-language papers, such as the New York *Democrat* and the Washington *National Workingmen’s Advocate*. “For months,” says Karl Obermann, biographer of Weydemeyer, “the two men [Marx and Engels] wrote only for America.”

When eleven German Communists were put on trial at Cologne, Germany, in 1852 (this was after Marx had gone to London), Marx—though ill and overworked—was obliged from a distance to carry on their defense. The evidence against them had been fabricated by the police. This is how Marx’s wife described the situation in a letter to a friend in New York:

All the proofs of the forgery have had to be provided from here and my husband has had to work all day and even far into the night. And then we have had to copy everything six or seven times and send it to Germany by various ways, over Frankfort, Paris, etc., because all letters to my husband and all his letters to Germany are opened and confiscated. The whole affair has now been reduced to a struggle between the police on the one hand and my husband on the other, and my husband is being made responsible for everything, even the conduct of the trial.

But “Marx won the victory,” his biographer, Franz Mehring, declares, and exposed the forgery, though seven of the Communists received prison sentences anyhow. Part of the success of the expose was due to the publication in the Boston *New-England Zeitung* of Marx’s revelations about the German police shenanigans. Engels got 450 copies from the United States for distribution in Germany, where the press was muzzled.

During the political struggles here that preceded the election of Abraham Lincoln, and the Civil War that followed, Marx’s interest in the United States was intense and his contribution to its progress was considerable. Joseph Weydemeyer and others devoted to Marx’s teachings



played an important role in mobilizing thousands of newly naturalized Germans behind Lincoln's Republican Party in the presidential election campaign of 1860. In New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Chicago, especially, the German population voted for Lincoln and free labor. The researches of Herman Schlueter, labor historian, and F. J. Herriott, author of the noted study, "The Conference of the Deutsches Haus" in Chicago on the eve of Lincoln's nomination, as well as other authorities, show that the German vote was a decisive factor that helped tip the balance toward Lincoln and guarantee his election. Leading and educating those German-Americans, and a considerable section of organized labor also, were the Communist Clubs of New York, Chicago and St. Louis, and their mentors in London, Marx and Engels.

As for the Civil War itself, one need only look at the correspondence of Marx and Engels as given in *The Civil War in the United States*, brought out by International Publishers in 1937, to see how the two men followed and analyzed its progress for the entire four years. Not only their private thinking is revealed here, for some of it seeped through into the conduct of the War. Marx urged the arming of the slaves, the issuing of an emancipation proclamation, the strategy of marching through Georgia to the Atlantic to cut off the Confederate Army from its base of supplies. One can't claim that Lincoln followed the direct advice, or even that he was precisely aware that it had been given: but it was published (some of it in the *Tribune*), and it got around. Other keen minds came to similar conclusions (Frederick Douglass, for one), and Lincoln eventually acted.

Lincoln certainly knew of the help he got from the newly organized First International, for he received and answered their greeting, sent on November 29, 1864, through the American ambassador in London, Charles Francis Adams, congratulating him on his re-election to the presidency. This message, which was the first public statement of the International, said in part:

The workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the Middle Class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead the country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.

It was Marx who proposed to the General Council of the International the sending of this congratulatory message; it was Marx who wrote it, and Marx's signature, with others of the Central Council, was on it.

In his reply, Lincoln agreed that the conflict "with slavery-maintaining insurgents" was indeed "the cause of human nature." He said the North felt "new encouragement" from the message of "the workingmen of Europe." He was glad, he said, to receive "their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies."

Lincoln also knew of the demonstrations by British workers in protest against the British government's contemplated intervention in the Civil War on the side of the South—and of their success in helping to prevent that particular barbarity. Marx and the International had a good deal to do with this action of the British working class.

The overall relationship of Marx and Lincoln cannot be adequately judged without taking into account Lincoln's famous statement: "... that labor is prior to, and independent of capital; that, in fact, capital is the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed; that labor can exist without capital, but that capital could never have existed without labor. Hence... labor is the superior... greatly the superior to capital."

After Lincoln's assassination, Marx again wrote on behalf of the International, this time to President Andrew Johnson, expressing condolence at the untimely death of "one of the rare men who succeed in becoming great, without ceasing to be good"—and at the same time urging strict fulfillment of the "stern duties" left by the Civil War. But there was no reply. The new chief executive proved unable to carry out the "political reconstruction and social regeneration" that Marx spoke of.

It is not well-known that a third official communication to our country was issued by the First International, congratulating the American people on the successful ending of the Civil War. This was the address, *To the People of the United States*, and it declared: "No more shall the salesman's hammer barter human flesh and blood in your market places, causing humanity to shudder at its barbarity."

The third letter was written in the same spirit as the *Address to President Lincoln* and the *Address to President Johnson*, both of which were composed by Marx, but its author, according to the recently published *Minutes of the General Council*, was the International's general secretary, William R. Cremer, an Englishman. Though the letter was not Marx's, its content was certainly Marxist. It was adopted at a meeting (Sept. 28, 1865) at which Marx was present, and the next day the General Council's important Standing Committee, of which Marx was a Member, approved it and ordered copies sent to all sections of the International, including that in New York.

It is important to recall this Address today because of the following passage, which elaborated a point stressed over and over again by Marx:

Since we have had the honour of expressing sympathy with your sufferings, a word of encouragement for your efforts, and of congratulations for the results, permit us also to add a word of counsel for the future.

As injustice to a section of your people has produced such direful results, let that cease. Let your citizens of to-day be declared free and equal, without reserve.

If you fail to give them citizens' rights, while you demand citizens' duties there will yet remain a struggle for the future which may again stain your country with your people's blood . . .

We warn you then, as brothers in the common cause, to remove every shackle from freedom's limbs, and your victory will be complete.

We cannot leave the subject of the Civil War without mention of the followers of Marx who, with his blessing, joined Lincoln's northern armies to battle against the Confederacy. Of these, chief are Joseph Weydemeyer, who became a brigadier general and August Willich, another member of the Communist League, who also became a brigadier general in the Union Army. These Communists were latter-day Lafayettes who not only fought for freedom here but became citizens and builders of our country.

Nor can we omit mention of Marx's articles in the Vienna paper, *Die Presse*, through which he popularized in Europe the cause of Lincoln and the war against slavery. He praised, for example, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, and Wendell Phillips for their leadership of the Abolitionists before and during the War. Speaking of Wendell Phillips, Marx wrote on one occasion: "For 30 years he has without intermission and at the risk of his life proclaimed emancipation of the slaves as his battle-cry, regardless alike of the persiflage of the press, the enraged howls of paid rowdies and the conciliatory representations of solicitous friends."

Just as the first public statement of the International's General Council was to an American president, so the first message of the International's 1st Congress—at Geneva, 1866—was to an American labor union. Marx congratulated the National Labor Union then meeting in Baltimore for demanding, as did the Geneva Congress, that the workday be limited to eight hours.

Some of Marx's pithy advice to American workers is as relevant today as it was in his lifetime. Labor in a white skin cannot be free so long as labor in a black skin is branded, he told them.

The first International held five historic congresses in different European cities, and some of the delegates in 1868 and 1872 were from the United States. At the Fourth Congress, held in Basle, Switzerland, there

was one American delegate; at the Fifth Congress, at the Hague, Holland, there were four Americans. It was this Fifth Congress which voted, at the suggestion of Marx and Engels, to transfer the head office to the United States.

The International was moved to New York in 1872, where it functioned with an American governing council headed by F. A. Sorge, friend of Marx, as general secretary, for nearly five years before it was finally dissolved. The International was in constant touch with Marx, who advised on innumerable problems, as described in that excellent work, *The First International in America*, by Samuel Bernstein. (Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1962) During its life in this country, the International was an important initiating and guiding force for American labor, and its teachings formed the direct foundation for the socialist movement that followed.

If one examines the work of the International in New York, one realizes how splendid that foundation was. During the "long depression," of 1873-1877 demands were formulated for relief and for public works; it sent petitions to New York City's mayor and to the Congress in Washington for action on behalf of the jobless; it called on President Grant to summon a special session of Congress in order to sanction broad internal improvement programs. It issued a "Manifesto to the Working People of North America" which insisted on a moratorium on rent, work for all at regular rates, and an eight-hour day. It organized unions (such as the Furniture Workers' Association in 1873); it supported strikes and raised money for the strikers; and it set up (as in Newark, N.J.) labor defense councils on behalf of arrested workers. And not only on the Atlantic seaboard: "The hand of the International," says Bernstein, "was as plain in Chicago as in Philadelphia or Newark." But never was the lesson omitted that Socialism was the ultimate solution for economic woes.

Marx himself gave the best analysis of the achievement and significance of the International, and at the same time, as Mehring writes, refuted the assertion that it had been a failure.

"In reality," Marx said, "the social-democratic workers' parties in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Holland and North America, organized more or less within national frontiers, represent just as many international groups. They no longer represent isolated sections, sparsely distributed over various countries and held together by a General Council on the periphery, but the working class itself in constant, active and direct connection, held together by the exchange of ideas, mutual assistance and joint aims. . . . Thus, far from dying out, the International has developed from one stage to another and higher one in which many of its



original tendencies have already been fulfilled. During the course of this constant development it will experience many changes before the final chapter in its history can be written."

Reference has been made to Marx's correspondence with Weydemeyer, and to his exchange of messages with F.A. Sorge, general secretary of the International while it was located in New York. He also corresponded with many other Americans, and so did Engels.

Among the Americans Marx wrote to were his old-time Chartist friend, G.J. Harney, then assistant secretary of state of Massachusetts; Moncure D. Conway, a prominent social thinker and philanthropist; and John Swinton, noted editor who had visited him the year before, and to whom he sent a copy of the French edition of *Capital*. In his letter to Swinton, Marx described Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* as "a last attempt—to save the capitalistic regime."

Among those Engels wrote to—after Marx's death—were Philip Van Patten, an early national secretary of the Socialist Labor Party; Hermann Schlucter, the labor historian; and Florence Kelley, noted social worker who had earlier translated and had published Marx's lecture on *Free Trade* (Boston, 1888), and also Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (N.Y. 1887). The latter book about England did not appear in England until five years after it came out in the United States.

In his letter to Schlucter, Engels made the oft-quoted statement: "Once the Americans get started, it will be with an energy and impetuosity compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children." In his letter to Florence Kelley, Engels made that other oft-mentioned observation: "I consider that many of the Germans there have made a grievous mistake when they tried, in the face of a mighty and glorious movement [the Knights of Labor] not of their own creation, to make of their imported and not always understood theory a kind of . . . dogma, and to keep aloof from any movement which did not accept that dogma. Our theory is not a dogma but the exposition of a process of evolution, and that process involves successive phases."

In writing to Conway, Marx spoke of the plight of the Communards fleeing from the bloody vengeance of French reaction after the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871. Marx encloses, he says, a list of some 80-90 refugees, whose condition is "truly deplorable," and urges formation of "a special committee, if possible, to take over the job of finding work for the refugees, most of whom are skilled workers and professional men." Marx himself probably did more for them than anyone else. Mehring says that Marx's house was a refuge for the fugitive Communards "who were always certain of receiving advice and finding assistance there."

Marx was equally concerned about the Irish victims of British oppres-

sion, and concerning them Mehring tells a delightful incident involving Marx's daughter Jenny:

The English press obstinately remained silent about the barbarities committed against the imprisoned Fenians, so Jenny Marx sent a number of articles to Rochefort's *Marseillaise* under the pseudonym of Williams, a name which her father had used quite a lot in the fifties. In these articles she described passionately how democratic England treated its political prisoners, and these revelations in a paper which was probably more read than any other on the continent were too much for Gladstone. A few weeks later most of the imprisoned Fenians were free and on their way to America.

Another daughter, Eleanor Marx Aveling, translator and writer, made a lecture trip through the United States with her writer-husband, Edward Aveling, and reported on conditions she saw. Engels, too, made a month-long trip to this country, and rather enjoyed himself. "Everything in America has to be new," he wrote in his notes, "everything has to be rational, everything has to be practical, consequently, everything is different from what it is with us."

It is worth noting, briefly, that two typically American objections to Communist and Socialist organizations were handled effectively by Marx.

One was the charge of *conspiracy*, of *secrecy*. "Our Statutes," said Marx, speaking for the International, "make it the duty of all sections of our association to act openly, and even if the statutes were not clear on the point, the character of an association which identifies itself with the working class excludes any possibility of such an association taking on the form of a secret society."

The other was the charge of *violence*, of advocating *forcible overthrow* of a government as a matter of principle, regardless of conditions. Marx dealt with this at a First International meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as follows:

Some day, the workers must conquer political supremacy, in order to establish the new organization of labor: they must overthrow the old political system whereby the old institutions are sustained. If they fail to do this, they will suffer the fate of the early Christians, who neglected to overthrow the old system, and who, for that reason, never had a kingdom in this world. Of course, I must not be supposed to imply that the means to this end will be everywhere the same. We know that special regard must be paid to the institutions, customs, and traditions of various lands; and we do not deny that there are certain countries, such as the United States and England, in which the workers may hope to secure their ends by peaceful means. If I mistake not, Holland belongs to the same

category. Even so, we have to recognize that in most continental countries, force will have to be the lever of revolution. It is to force that in due time the workers will have to appeal if the dominion of labor is at long last to be established.

It was Marx's insistence on this rational approach that led finally to a break between the International and the followers of Auguste Blanqui. The latter advocated the seizure of power through a daring coup carried out by a small minority, that is, by a putsch. Marx would have none of it. Marx wanted the whole working class informed and organized, having faith that they would take the power in their own time and in their way. Among Marx's reasons for moving the International to New York was that of getting free from the Blanquist tendency which, because of the despondency following the fall of the Paris Commune, was temporarily strong in some parts of Europe. Another reason was to avoid the anti-political Bakuninist influence which was then dominant in Spain and Italy. The Bakuninists wanted, it was said, "to destroy political power, not to conquer it" (Mehring). Marx was determined that the International, while it lasted, should have a chance to give the world's workers a correct general line to improve their lot and win eventual control over their destiny.

Marx himself felt keenly the frustrations of poverty. Referring to his fiftieth birthday, he exclaimed, "Half a century on my back and still a pauper!" But he never surrendered. To Engels he wrote, when his only son died at the age of nine: "In all the terrible anxiety of suffering I have gone through, I have been sustained by the thought of you and your friendship, and by the hope that we have still something worthwhile to do together in the world."

John Swinton, the correspondent referred to above, a distinguished American journalist, who during the Civil War was managing editor of the *New York Times*, visited Marx in 1880, less than three years before Marx died. In an article in the *New York Sun*, on which he worked after leaving the *Times*, Swinton wrote:

One of the most remarkable men of the day who played an inscrutable but puissant part in the revolutionary politics of the past forty years is Karl Marx. A man without desire for show or fame, caring nothing for the fanfaronade of life or the pretense of power, without haste and without rest, a strong, broad, elevated mind, full of far-reaching projects, logical methods, and practical aims, he has stood and yet stands behind more of the earthquakes which have convulsed nations and destroyed thrones, and do now menace and appall crowned heads and established frauds, than any other man in Europe. . . .

He was at Ramsgate, the great seashore of the Londoners, while I was in London, and there I found him in his cottage with his family of two generations. The saintly faced, sweet-voiced, graceful woman of suavity who welcomed me at the door was evidently the mistress of the house and wife of Karl Marx. And is this massive-headed, generous-featured, courtly, kindly man of 60, with the bushy masses of long revelling gray hair, Karl Marx? His dialogue reminded me of that of Socrates—so free, so sweeping, so creative, so incisive, so genuine—with its sardonic touches, its gleams of humor, and its sportive merriment. He spoke of the political forces and popular movements of the various countries of Europe—the vast current of spirit of Russia, the motions of the German mind, the action of France, the immobility of England. He spoke hopefully of Russia, philosophically of Germany, cheerfully of France, and somberly of England—referring contemptuously to the atomistic reforms over which the Liberals of the British Parliament spend their time. Surveying the European world, country after country, indicating the features and developments and the personages of the surface and under the surface, he showed that things were working toward ends which will assuredly be realized.

Swinton spoke of Marx's *Capital* (he meant the first volume, since the second and third had not yet appeared), which had been published in German and in a Russian and a French translation, but not yet at that time in an English one. Marx told him, he said, of the volumes to come, saying that the third—on "Credit"—would be largely illustrated from the United States, "where credit had such an amazing development." Swinton continued, in the closing words of his interview:

The afternoon is waning toward the long twilight of an English summer evening as Mr. Marx discourses, and he proposes a walk through the seaside town and along the shore to the beach, upon which we see many thousand people, largely children, disporting themselves. Here we find on the sand his family party—the wife, who had already welcomed me, his two daughters with their children, and his two sons-in-law, one of whom (Charles Longuet) is a professor in King's College, London, and the other, I believe, is a man of letters (Paul Lafargue). It was a delightful party—about ten in all—the father and the two young wives, who were happy with their children, and the grandmother of the children, rich in the joysomeness and serenity of her wifely nature. Not less fine than Victor Hugo himself does Karl Marx understand the art of being a grandfather; but more fortunate than Hugo, the married children of Marx live to cheer his years. . . . And the talk was of the world, and of man, and of time, and of ideas, as our glasses tinkled over the sea.



That was 1880, and the first English translation of *Capital*, by a third son-in-law, Edward Aveling, and Samuel Moore, and edited by Frederick Engels, did appear in 1887, four years after Marx's death. But it was known and quoted long before that, in Marx's own lifetime, on both sides of the Atlantic. As a matter of fact, says Paul Lafargue, in a memoir of the Marx family, "in America, during a big strike in New York passages from the work were published in the form of leaflets in order to urge the strikers to see it through and prove to them the justice of their demands."

The complete English text of *Capital*, including Volumes II and III, translated by Ernest Untermann, was first published by Charles H. Kerr and Company in Chicago—Volume II in 1906 and Volume III in 1909.

## II

### *Marxism in Yankee Politics*

"In a Yankee country," Marx wrote to an American friend, half-jokingly, it was necessary "to consider the Yankees first of all."

He had in mind the historical Yankee propensities, characteristics, and traditions in matters political, as well as the special problems American workers had to face.

The story of Marxist political action in the United States, both in its successes and its failures, illustrate Marx's adroit and somewhat cryptic wisecrack.

The start here was propitious, positive, and early. The United States was the world's second country to have a functioning Marxist political party. The Workingmen's Party of the United States was organized on July 19-23, 1876, in Philadelphia, one hundred years (almost to the day) after the Declaration of Independence.

The dates emphasized are those on which the Marxist impress was unmistakable, even though limited. The first country to have a Marxist party was Germany, in 1875, through unity between the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle, on the one hand, and those associated with the Marxists, Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel. This is not to deny that it was Lassalle who founded the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1869; nor is it to deny that Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* severely took to task the program of the united Social Democratic Party of 1876. The latter party was indeed a Lassallean-Marxist compromise, but it was Marxist in large part, and, more important, the Marxist influence was destined to expand and take control.

Let us outline the rise of Marxist parties during the 1870's:

1875: The German Social-Democratic Party.

- 1876: The Workingmen's Party of the United States.
- 1876: The Portuguese Socialist Party (a very small group).
- 1877: The Austrian Socialist Party (which was quickly crushed by the government: a new one had to be organized in the '80's).
- 1878: The Danish Social Democratic Federation.
- 1878: The Dutch Social Democratic Union (later re-organized as a party in the '90's).
- 1879: The Spanish Socialist Workers Party (small, and obstructed by anarchist influence in the working class).

France did not have a Socialist Party until 1880, at which time Jules Guesde and Gabriel Deville, assisted by Marx's sons-in-law, Jean Longuet and Paul Lafargue, organized it on a platform written by Marx himself. Belgium formed her Socialist Party that same year. A year later, Great Britain's Social Democratic Federation was established under Henry M. Hyndman's leadership. Tsarist Russia's first Marxist organization, led by G.V. Plekhanov, was set up in 1883. Then came Norway's in 1887, Austria's second try in 1888, and Sweden's in 1889.

It was not until the 1890's that Italy acquired a Marxist party (1892), and after her came Poland (1893) and Holland (her second try, 1894). In tsarist Russia, Lenin's League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class—which followed Plekhanov's earlier group—began to function in 1895. In Ireland, the first Marxist party was organized in 1896 by James Connolly, who had lived and worked for some years here in the United States.

With the exception of Argentina (1896), all parties of Marxist socialism in South America and Asia were formed after 1900.

The First International officially ended its existence July 18th, 1876; the next day, the ten representatives of the International, who had just dissolved that historic body, joined representatives of other groups to begin establishing the Workingmen's Party of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Some essentials of the story resemble the formation of the German Social Democratic Party the year before. The Lassalleans in this country had already, as in Germany, formed Social Democratic Organizations. The chief ones were the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of North

1. It is sometimes said that the "Social Party," formed by Sorge and other members of the New York Communist Club in 1868, was the first Marxist party in the United States, which may be true in a verbal sense. But this "party" was set up before the International was moved from London to New York; it never functioned as a party; and it lasted only a few months, soon merging with the National Labor Union in early 1869, and becoming Section I of the First International in New York in 1872.

America, and the Workingmen's Party of Illinois, both set up in 1874. The new party—the Marxist Workingmen's Party of the United States—was thus a merger of the two Lassallean parties and the sections of the First International.

This new party represented the entire country, with membership in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Newark, N.J., Paterson, N.J., Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, Grand Rapids, Mich., San Francisco, Lawrence, Mass., Milwaukee, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and New Haven, Conn. Leading individuals included F.A. Sorge, a musician, the International's general secretary; Karl Speyer, a cabinet-maker, a close associate of Sorge; Otto Weydemeyer, son of Marx's old friend, Joseph Weydemeyer; J.P. McDonnell, an Internationalist and trade-union organizer, who was made editor of the new party's paper, *The Labor Standard*; Adolph Strasser, a Lassallean and cigar-maker; P.J. McGuire, a Lassallean; and Adolph Douai, editor of the German paper, *Die Arbeiter-Union*. The first national secretary was native-born Phillip Van Patten, who later carried on a correspondence with Engels.

The difference between Marxists and Lassalleans expressed itself practically in disagreement about entering candidates, for public office. A year or so before the Workingmen's Party was formed, the Marxists stated that it would be advisable to postpone political activity "until the organization of the working classes has progressed far enough, until the laborers in the organizations are sufficiently disciplined, that they can come forward as a distinctly separate party, diametrically opposed to the old political middle class parties, that they can pursue and carry out their own objects." And in the compromise agreement made when the Party was formed, it was stated that all sections of the party were "earnestly invited to abstain from all political movements for the present and to turn their back on the ballot box."

But in little more than a year the party began to run candidates for local office, and perhaps this was in line—remembering Marx's phrase—with "considering the Yankees."

So it was that the new party in the next couple of years ran local candidates in New York, New Haven, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, Boston and Denver, and some were elected. In Chicago, one of its candidates for alderman was Albert R. Parsons, who about a decade afterward, led the fight for the 8-hour day and was hanged as a result of the Haymarket frame-up.

Note should be taken of the question of Lassalleanism. Ferdinand Lassalle was, like Marx, a German of Jewish descent and a brilliant pioneer socialist. His theory differed from Marx's in at least two important respects: he regarded socialism and the socialist movement as merely



national, and paid no attention to international aspects; and he put his whole faith in political action and disregarded trade unions. With Marx, of course, internationalism was a cardinal principle, and working-class political action was to be based on a unionized working class. The Lassalleian and Marxist trends competed for a few years, but within a generation the Marxist view pushed ahead in all socialist parties, including the American. One reason for this was the all-round and all-encompassing theory set forth in *Capital*, *Anti-Dühring*, and other classic works, against which Lassalleianism turned out to be mere unavailing demagoguery. As Wilhelm Liebknecht said in a telegram on the occasion of Marx's death: "Marx changed Social-Democracy from a *sect* . . . into a *party*."

The year after the Workingmen's Party was formed, its name was changed to Socialist Labor Party, and that is the name by which it is known in history.<sup>2</sup>

#### Socialist Labor Party

Many talented and prominent people became members of the Socialist Labor Party in the succeeding quarter of a century. One of these was C. Osborne Ward, a brother of the well-known sociologist Lester F. Ward. C. Osborne Ward twice visited the General Council of the First International in London and met Marx, and he afterward belonged to the First International in New York, though he was not always fully in line with its policies. After 1876, he lectured occasionally under Socialist Labor Party auspices. Most important, he was the author of the monumental work, *The Ancient Lowly*, privately published in 1888 and re-published by Charles H. Kerr & Co., in 1907. (A copy of it, marked "Gift of F.A. Sorge," may be found in the New York Public Library.) Ten years before this (1878) Ward had produced his *Labor Catechism of Political Economy: A Study for the People*, which was a thoughtful and sometimes scintillating but erratic hodgepodge of dialogues in which he discussed "scientific socialism," "monopoly," the principles of the Socialist Labor Party, political economy, government ownership of utilities, and so on.

Also notable among Socialist Labor Party leaders was German-born Dr. Adolph Douai, whose fine pamphlet "Better Times!" was first published in 1866, and re-published by the Socialist Labor Party in 1884. Unlike Weydemeyer and Sorge, Dr. Douai became a Marxist after he came to the United States.

Another pioneer socialist of the time—his name almost forgotten

2. "Socialistic Labor Party" was the official designation, as shown in the records of 1879 and 1881. Shortly afterward the term became *Socialist* Labor Party.

now—was P.A. Lofgreen, who published *The Coming Revolution: Its Principles*, in 1878 in St. Louis.<sup>3</sup> "My object," he said, on the title page, "is not to make people read, but to make them think." (This book, too, was in the private library of F.A. Sorge, and is now in the New York Public Library.) The content is, like Osborne Ward's *Labor Catechism*, a set of dialogues, with the aim of answering current objections to socialism.

Another Socialist Labor Party member was the brilliant Florence Kelley, who in 1888 translated into English, Marx's lecture on "Free Trade," which he had delivered in Brussels in 1848. She also translated Engels' classic, *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. Both works were published in the United States. She corresponded extensively with Engels.

Still another propagandist for the S.L.P. was Laurence Gronlund, an immigrant from Denmark, who wrote a significant exposition of socialism in 1884 called *The Cooperative Commonwealth*. He used this term, he said, to show "that Socialism is no importation, but a home-growth wherever found." This work is an important native Marx-influenced work on Socialism though as Engels noted, Gronlund-Lofgreen did a lot of borrowing of ideas without giving credit.

Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, published in 1888, is a work of fiction describing an imaginary socialist civilization. Thousands of readers of this romance became converts to socialism. Bellamy did not belong to the Socialist Labor Party, but he surely helped to build it. He disclaimed indebtedness to previous thinkers, but it is obvious that he absorbed a good deal of Marxism from the intellectual atmosphere of his time.

So great was Bellamy's influence through this novel that a kind of political party grew up around him based on "Nationalism"—from the *nationalizing* of railroads, mines, monopolies, utilities—a kind of utopian socialist party. But, as with Lassalleianism, so with Nationalism: there was no real basic theory, and many of Bellamy's adherents gradually went over to Marx. Here, for example is a news item from the *Workmen's Advocate*, November 22, 1890, page 1, column 3, which tells of the organizing of a local of the Socialist Labor Party in Brooklyn the week before. In the story is this sentence: "... Mr. C.H. Matchett of Nationalist Club No. 1 of Brooklyn and Organizer of the City Hall Section of the S.L.P. delivered an excellent lecture, in which he depicted the new conditions of industry and life under the Co-operative Commonwealth which it is the aim of Nationalism and Socialism to establish." The

3. It appears that "P.A. Lofgreen" was a pseudonym used by Lawrence Gronlund during an early sojourn in St. Louis. See Robert V. Bruce, 1877: *Year of Violence*.

concluding sentence was: "The name of this Section will be: 'The South Brooklyn American Section No. — of the Socialist Labor Party.'"

The C.H. Matchett referred to (who was both a Nationalist and a member of the S.L.P.) became in 1892, the first Socialist candidate for vice president of the United States.

Around 1890 appeared the Curacao-born Daniel De Leon, a lecturer at Columbia University on International Law. He had joined the Nationalists around the mid-1880's, and worked his way toward the Marxists. De Leon was a man of exceptional ability. His chief contribution to this country was to center the attention of the socialist-minded on Marx and Marxism. In the course of this he attended international congresses of the newly formed Second International. Furthermore, he helped to place Socialist ideas more definitely into national politics. He translated works by Marx, Engels, Bebel. And at the turn of the Century he established the first daily Socialist newspaper in English in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

One of De Leon's original writings was his *Two Pages from Roman History* (1903), the "two pages" being two lectures, one on plebs leaders and the other on the Gracchi brothers, famed tribunes of the Roman populace. Other early writings by De Leon included *Reform or Revolution*, a lecture at Boston in 1896, and *What Means This Strike?*, an address at Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1898.

In 1892, Simon Wing, of Boston, Massachusetts, a photographer, inventor of the "tin type" and of other photographic devices, and a manufacturer of cameras, was nominated for president, the first candidate for president of the first Marx-led party in the United States. Wing (1826-1910), a descendant of English settlers to Massachusetts in 1632, was an independent, original thinker. He began his voting career as an anti-slavery man, and after joining the Marxists continued as a Socialist his whole life till his death at the age of 84.

With Wing, as already stated, was the vice-presidential candidate, Brooklyn-born Charles H. Matchett, an electrician and an active member of the Knights of Labor. In 1892, Wing and Matchett won a vote of 21,512.

At the next presidential election, in 1896, Matchett was the S.L.P. candidate for president, and his running mate was Matthew Maguire, a New York-born machinist of Irish descent. Maguire was founder of the Machinists and Blacksmiths' Union and a leader in the 8-hour movement.

Matchett and Maguire won a vote of 36,275 for Socialism in 1896.

4. Exception must be made for the *St. Louis Star*, an English Marxist daily set up in 1877, which lasted about a year, according to Morris Hillquit's *History of Socialism in the United States*.

Meanwhile De Leon's positive contributions to Marxist history were beginning to run out. His insistence on Marxist principles, while it helped scientific socialism get on its feet, began after a while to solidify into dogma. Without intending it, De Leon was strait-jacketing the Marxist party into a sect.

Engels once said he wished that socialists would not pick quotations from Marx or himself, but "would think as Marx would have thought in their place." This is where De Leon failed.

His sectarianism in socialist theory spread over into labor and political tactics. As he grew older, he rejected all "immediate demands" as reformist; and he thought out a wholly unworkable trade union scheme, the results of which still plague American advocates of industrial unionism and of Marxism. Brilliant younger men were attracted to the Socialist movement—Hermann Schlueter, historian and friend of Engels; Morris Hillquit, lawyer and author of *History of Socialism in the United States*; James F. Carey of Massachusetts; Caleb Harrison of Illinois; Benjamin Hanford, Ohio-born printer; Algernon Lee, school teacher, originally of Ohio; Job Harriman, lawyer of California—all of them names to conjure with in socialist history, and all had originally joined the Socialist Labor Party. But they were cramped by De Leon's doctrinairism. In addition, independent socialists arose outside the party—W.J. Ghent, Illinois printer and author; John Spargo, Vermont journalist; Charles Edward Russell, journalist and muckraker; A.M. Simons, historian; Gustavus Myers, historian and muckraker; and others. Victor L. Berger in Milwaukee was leading his own Social Democratic constituents, among whom was Frederic Heath, editor and writer. And Eugene V. Debs, leader of the American Railway Union, but outside the Socialist Labor Party, was reading Marx and thinking.

Hillquit, backed by Max Hayes and Job Harriman, led a revolt against De Leon, who, unfortunately, seemed not to understand what was happening, or why. They joined Berger's Milwaukee Social Democrats, and the supporters of Debs, to found a new Socialist party.

Out of the Socialist Labor Party and into the new Socialist Party marched the cream of the cadres educated, but frustrated, by De Leon. Around the year 1900 (between 1898 and 1901 to be exact) old and new Socialists realigned themselves. These included not only all those named above but also the first Socialist candidates for high office: Simon Wing, Charles H. Matchett, and Matthew Maguire. Among them, were three magnificent women who left the Socialist Labor Party for the Socialist Party: Florence Kelley, the brilliant friend of Engels; Kate Richards O'Hare, later editor of the *National Rip Saw*; and the devoted young Ella



Reeve Bloor. Also included eventually, was Solon De Leon, De Leon's talented son.<sup>5</sup>

The turn of the century thus saw the split finalized, the first ideological division within the Marxist movement in this country. De Leon lived fourteen years longer, and the Socialist Labor Party still has a formal existence, but in reality (except for two incidents to be noted later) the story of the Socialist Labor Party ends here.

### The Socialist Party

The birth of the Socialist Party of America was as interesting as that of the Workingmen's Party of the United States, but it had a different pattern. The new party had greater successes, and carried Socialist progress to a higher stage; but it had its own problems that were just as difficult as those of the older party, and potential inner divisions that turned out to be equally unbridgeable.

First of all, there was the division between itself and the Socialist Labor Party, for always there were efforts to unite the two parties of socialism. One of those who sought unity was Socialist Labor Party member Boris Reinstein, who, years later, became librarian of the Third International. But unity of these two organizations was a chimera. It never had a chance.

The Socialist Party started in several parts of the country before 1900; it ran candidates in the 1900 presidential election before it was actually organized; and finally, after much travail, it did become an organized party, with elected officers, a headquarters, and real existence in 1901. The events, the actors, and the successive staging of the scenes constitute an evolving drama that must be sorted out and described before any analysis of its later history will be understandable.

While in the '90's unrest was beginning within the Socialist Labor Party, there were developing throughout the country other forces which also helped to build the new Socialist Party.

The Christian Socialist movement, starting in Boston in 1889, declared that "the aim of socialism is embraced in the aim of Christianity," and insisted that "the Church has a definite duty" in regard to it. The movement lasted only a few years, but one of its graduates was Professor George D. Herron, who taught Applied Christianity at Iowa College, and eventually became a leader of the Socialist Party. Herron and his followers were the second acquisition (after those who withdrew from the Socialist Labor Party) of cadres to join the new party.

5. Italian-born Louis C. Fraina, New York journalist, did not leave the Socialist Labor Party until 1914.

In the first decade of the twentieth century a new kind of Christian Socialism developed, which was different from the earlier one. The earlier kind held itself aloof from the Socialist party of its time, and disapproved of the class struggle. Not so the newer kind of Christian Socialists. The interdenominational Christian Socialist Fellowship, organized in 1909, explicitly supported the candidates, the Marxist program, and the activities of the Socialist Party, and even sent delegates to the congresses of the Second International. Much the same could be said of another such organization, functioning, however, only within the Episcopal Church: the Church Socialist League, set up in 1911. These two socially militant Marx-influenced groups of Christian Socialists numbered in their ranks younger colleagues, so to speak, of Professor Herron, including the Rev. Edward Ellis Carr, head of the Christian Socialist Fellowship, and the Rev. Eliot White, a vice-president of the Church Socialist League, along with such lay Socialists as Prof. Vida D. Scudder and social worker, Ellen Gates Starr.

Simultaneously with the Christian Socialists should be considered the Populists—"People's Party"—which was, in a way, the last genuine non-Marxist revolt of the exploited in this country. It was based on the poor farmers of the west and south, and had a reform program. Its beginning was in 1890 in Kansas, and its first candidates for president and vice-president won a million votes in 1892, the same year that saw the first Marxist presidential candidates. But the Populists endorsed Bryan in 1896, and their separate place in political history came to an end. However, Eugene V. Debs himself at this time supported the Populists; so did Henry Demarest Lloyd, author of *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894); and J.A. Wayland, founder of the *Appeal to Reason*. Indeed by 1909 some fifteen per cent of the Socialist Party were old Populists. They had moved toward Marxism. Thus, the Populists served as the third source of cadres for the Socialist Party.

The historic Pullman strike of 1894, centering in Chicago and fought by Eugene V. Debs' American Railway Union, was the culmination of a series of great strikes of the period; it was a definite time of learning for American workers. The strike was defeated by government troops and court injunctions, and for this reason Debs turned his attention to political action. Two years later he began to think of socialism, but he thought at first of "colonization"—a plan to capture some western state and then spread socialism from there, which meant a queer marriage of community utopianism and local socialist politics. But the marriage went on the rocks. The colonizing Social Democracy of America, which was formed in 1897, and which Debs joined, split in 1898. The political contingent—that is, the Marxist-influenced group, led by Debs and Victor

Berger—separated themselves from the colonizers and formed the Social Democratic Party of America, with headquarters in Chicago. Thus, Debs and Berger—the American Railway Union and the Milwaukee Social Democrats—constitute the fourth and fifth acquisitions, respectively, for the Socialist Party.<sup>6</sup>

Most important, however, in a chronological sense, was the split within the Socialist Labor Party, and the setting up of a new “Socialist Labor Party.” This took place in July, 1899, when Section New York recalled the members of the National Committee (as it had the nominal power to do under the S.L.P. Constitution). The insurgents then elected Henry L. Slobodin, a New York Socialist Lawyer, as the new national secretary (they hoped) of the Socialist Labor Party. The intention of the party rebels was to oust De Leon and the then national secretary Henry Kuhn.

But, as Hillquit recorded later in his *History*, “The war within the Socialist Labor Party was now on in earnest.” The De Leon faction, through court action, was able to hold on to the party name, the party organ (*The People*), and the party property. The insurgent group was at last obliged for the time being to name itself the Social Democratic Party (a sort of standard term), and its organ *The Worker*. This group, led by Morris Hillquit of New York, Job Harriman of California, and Max Hayes of Ohio, then called a convention (1899) at Rochester, N.Y., and took two important actions: they invited unity between themselves and the newly formed Social Democratic Party of Debs and Berger; and they nominated national candidates for office for the 1900 elections: Job Harriman for president and Max Hayes for vice president.

Now came the crucial negotiations for unity between the “Rochester faction” of the S.L.P. (unwillingly registered as the Social Democratic Party) and the Debs-Berger Social Democratic Party located in Chicago. A committee of nine from each side carried on the unity discussions. Hillquit, Harriman, Max Hayes, J. Mahlon Barnes and others represented the “Rochester” S.L.P. faction, while Victor Berger, Frederick Heath, James F. Carey, Margaret Haile and others represented the Debs-Berger organization.

“To seal the treaty of peace,” as Hillquit puts it, it was agreed at the outset that the top candidates in 1900 would be Eugene V. Debs for president and Job Harriman for vice-president, and in this way there was a guarantee of socialist candidates on the ballot. (The Rochester nomination of Harriman was downgraded to second place, and that of Max

6. Some S.L.P. members went over to the Debs-Berger Social Democracy in 1897-8, without waiting for the S.L.P. insurgents led by Hillquit, to organize at Rochester in 1899. One of them was New York lawyer Isaac A. Hourwich, father of Nicholas I. Hourwich, who years later was a leader of the Socialist Party left wing.

Hayes for vice-president was dropped, in the interest of unity.) In addition, the two sides also agreed to accept as a campaign platform the “Rochester S.L.P.” program plus the Debs-Berger Social Democratic “immediate demands.”

But the two could not agree on a name for the party, nor on a party headquarters, nor on national officers. While the election campaign was on there was a “tacit truce” between the unity-seeking groups, and Debs and Harriman won a vote of 87,814 in 1900, the highest socialist vote recorded in the United States up to that time.

The Socialist Labor Party, now a purely De Leon-led group, also ran candidates in 1900, who received a vote of 34,191—less than half the vote of the new party, and even less than its own vote in 1896. But observers were not slow to note that the combined vote of the two socialist organizations indicated a fairly strong voter interest throughout the country in Marxist political ideas, at this beginning of the twentieth century.

With the election past and considerable success achieved for the “new” socialist party, a convention was called to meet at Indianapolis in 1901. There were 124 delegates, of whom three were Negro and one was Puerto Rican. Eighty per cent of the delegates were nativeborn. Leon Greenbaum was elected the first national secretary; the headquarters were established at St. Louis, Mo.; the agreed name of the organization was the Socialist Party of America.

“The Socialist Party of America, in national convention assembled,” said the first paragraph of the Platform, “reaffirms its adherence to the principles of international socialism, and declares its aim to be the organization of the working class and those in sympathy with it into a political party, with the object of conquering the powers of government and using them for the purpose of transforming the present system of private ownership of the means of production and distribution into collective ownership by the entire people.”

Immediate demands, which were opposed by De Leon, were defended: “we recognize that the time and manner of the transition to socialism also depend upon the stage of development reached by the proletariat.” The Party, therefore, would “support all active efforts of the working class to better its condition.” The Party supported “reduction of the hours of labor,” higher pay, “state or national insurance” against unemployment, “equal civil and political rights for men and women,” and other reforms, including public ownership of the means of transportation, communication and utilities. The platform warned, however, against “so-called public-ownership” in which capitalists sought control “for the purpose of obtaining greater security in the exploitation of other indus-



tries and not for the amelioration of the conditions of the working class."

From 1901 on, the Socialist Party grew rapidly. The following table from the *American Labor Yearbook* for 1917-18, outlines the story:

Year	Candidate	S.P. Presidential Vote
1900	Eugene V. Debs & Job Harriman .....	87,814
1904	Eugene V. Debs & Benjamin Hanford .....	402,283
1908	Eugene V. Debs & Benjamin Hanford .....	420,713
1912	Eugene V. Debs & Emil Seidel .....	897,011
1916	Allan L. Benson & George R. Kirkpatrick .....	590,297

Debs' running mate in 1904 and 1908 was Benjamin Hanford, Cleveland-born union printer and Socialist, a popular agitator in the press and on the soapbox. His articles were collected from the New York *Call* and published in 1909 in the pamphlet, *Fight for Your Life*, which included a story creating the legendary "Jimmy Higgins," the type of indefatigable rank and file Socialist who made every party activity succeed.

In 1912, when nearly a million votes were won by the Socialist Party, Debs' running mate was Emil Seidel, the mayor of Milwaukee, most important city to be headed by a Socialist.

In 1916, as the table shows, the Socialist vote declined to half a million, partly because Debs was not this time the Party's candidate, and partly because of the confusion and uncertainty arising out of the First World War. (Woodrow Wilson, Democrat, was campaigning to "keep us out of war.") The Socialist candidate for president was Allan L. Benson, the well-known journalist and muckraker, and for vice-president another writer, George R. Kirkpatrick, author of *War—What For?*

A further and more significant indication of Marxist influence in politics was the election of many local officials throughout the country. In 1912, according to James Weinstein in *Studies on the Left* (Winter, 1960), 1200 electoral offices in "340 municipalities from coast to coast" were filled by Socialists, "among them 79 mayors in 24 states." There were in that year 22 Socialists in state legislatures. Victor Berger was elected congressman from Wisconsin in 1910 and Meyer London from New York in 1914. Emil Seidel became mayor of Milwaukee in 1910 and Thomas Van Lear the mayor of Minneapolis in 1916. Other fairly large cities that elected Socialist mayors were Flint and Kalamazoo in Michi-

gan, Butte in Montana, and Schenectady in New York. In 1911 Ohio elected seventeen socialist mayors; Minnesota, Illinois, and Pennsylvania elected six each; and Michigan and Utah, five each. In 1912 Socialist mayors were chosen in Gulfport, Florida, and Winnfield, Louisiana.

Theodore Roosevelt was worried, it is said, by the rise in Socialist strength. Already in 1908, when Debs campaigned across the country on the "Red Special" (consisting of an engine and one coach) there was, wrote Ray Ginger in *The Bending Cross*, a desperate campaign by the old party politicians to "Stop Debs."

Important is the fact that in 1916, despite the slump shown in the Table, there was a recorded Socialist vote in 47 of the 48 states.<sup>7</sup> (*American Labor Yearbook*, 1917-18.) In seventeen of them the vote was more than 10,000: California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin. Others that were just under 10,000 but more than 9,000 were Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon.

A further instance of Marxist influence is the steady and gradual adoption of Socialist "immediate demands," not only in legislation but in the platforms of other parties. The "Bull Moose" Progressive Party in 1912, for example, took over quite a few planks from the Socialist platform. Among them were direct election of U.S. Senators, equal suffrage for men and women, prohibition of injunctions in labor disputes (with a little hedging), the abolition of child labor, the eight-hour day (not completely), the abolition of convict contract labor, a department of labor in the Cabinet, and so on.

In the Weinstein article cited above there is a table of Socialist periodicals in twenty-eight states, showing that some 140 such papers were in existence during the years 1913-1916 (omitting those founded in 1917) of which more than a hundred were English-language papers. These included the *Alaska Socialist*, of Fairbanks, Alaska; the *Oakland, California, World*; the *Eye Opener*, Chicago; the *International Socialist Review* (Chicago); the *Appeal to Reason*, Girard, Kansas; the *National Rip Saw*, St. Louis, Missouri; the *Melting Pot*, St. Louis, Missouri; the *New York Call*; the *Intercollegiate Socialist* (New York); the *Masses* (New York); the *Iconoclast*, Minot, North Dakota; the *Citizen*, Cleveland; *Justice*, Pittsburgh; and the *Milwaukee Leader*. In those years Oklahoma had 19

7. In the 48th state, Utah, there was a Socialist Party state secretary, C. T. Stoney, whose office was at 713 First Avenue in Salt Lake City; and there had been a vote of 9,023 for Debs in 1912. Apparently the 1916 vote was simply not reported.

Socialist papers in English; New York, 10; Ohio, 10; Minnesota, 8; Pennsylvania, 8; Kansas, 7; Missouri, 6; and California, 5.

Two socialist publications that were no longer extant in 1913, when Weinstein's list starts, were nonetheless important: the *Coming Nation* (1893) and *Wilshire's Monthly* (1900), both of which lasted many years.

Almost all of these papers were privately owned, and most showed the aberrations and pet emphases of their publishers; but all supported the Socialist Party, its candidates and its program. All of them advertised and sold works on scientific socialism, including basic works by Marx and Engels: the *Communist Manifesto*; *Wage-labor and Capital*; *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; and *Capital* itself.

The private ownership of these papers was not calculated to emphasize party discipline or a unified concept of theory, but, under the conditions of the time, it did produce a varied approach to the public, aroused interest in Marxist ideas, and stimulated socialist thought among widely differing sections of the population.

In 1903, when his *History of Socialism in the United States* was published, Hillquit was already able to observe that the Socialist Party differed from the reform parties in being national rather than sectional. The Populists had their strength in the West, the Greenbackers in the Middle West, and the Henry George movement in the East. "The Socialist vote, however," he said, "is pretty well distributed all over the country."

There ought indeed to be a history of the Socialist Party in each of the states, but very few have been produced. The Socialist history of New York and California is generally available; William Z. Foster included in his work some treatment of Washington State, where Dr. Herman F. Titus edited the *Seattle Socialist*; studies of the Non-Partisan League of North Dakota have incidentally revealed previous Socialist history there; Meridel Le Sueur's *Crusaders* has given us much of the Socialist background of Minnesota; and my biography of Charles E. Ruthenberg, *The Day Is Coming*, contains a good deal of data on Ohio.

In addition, some university graduate theses of uneven quality have been done on the Socialist history of Oklahoma, North Dakota, California, Louisiana and a few other states. One of these, Donald Kenneth Pickens' master's thesis in 1957, was entitled *The Program and Principles of Oklahoma Socialism* (University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma). In his dedication he says it was "written in memory of Grandfather Pickens, an Oklahoma Socialist." Dr. Ruth A. Allen, Emeritus Professor of Economics of the University of Texas, has done some research in the labor history of her state, including data on Thomas A. Hickey, old-time Socialist leader, who was a member of both the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party.

There is need for much further work. Thus, why not a history of the Alabama Socialist movement? In Bessemer, Alabama, the *Southern Socialist* was published early in the 1900's, edited by G. W. Price. He said in the September, 1903, issue: "We print 1000 copies of this number, and expect to issue 1500 copies of the next number. How many do you want?" The paper referred to the "world's greatest philosopher in political economy, Karl Marx." On the front cover of this number was a portrait of "Comrade F.X. Waldhurst," a 35-year old cabinet worker, who was "State Secretary of the Socialist Party of Alabama." It was announced that C.H. Spencer would be the Party's candidate for mayor of Bessemer. The State of Alabama, it said, already had twenty-eight local branches, and intended to have more. And a few years later, in 1912, Alabama gave Debs 3,029 votes.

Or why not a socialist history of Missouri, where Marx's friend, Joseph Weydemeyer, and the latter's son Otto, settled down? In St. Louis there used to be a branch of the First International. After the Civil War, according to biographer Karl Obermann, Joseph Weydemeyer was elected county auditor in St. Louis, taking office on January 1, 1866. By 1910, the *Coming Nation*, published in St. Louis, was saying "Socialism is the next stage in human progress." In 1911, Missouri elected socialist mayors in four cities: Buffalo, Cardwell, Gibson, and Minden Mines. By 1912 Missouri was able to give Debs 14,612 votes.

Louisiana is notable in that it had the highest Socialist vote in 1912 of any southern state: 5,240. In earlier and later years its vote was much lower. The key to the 1912 vote was the great lumber workers' struggle in which Bill Haywood personally took a hand, a struggle in which Louisiana Socialists cooperated with the I.W.W., and in which white and Negro workers were united in splendid solidarity. Covington Hall, Louisiana's Socialist poet, wrote a leaflet for this "long, hard bitter three-year (1910-13) 'lumber war'." In an article in the *International Socialist Review*, Covington Hall said the timber workers, white and black, "had grown tired of the 'white supremacy' and 'social equality' flim-flam, and set out to organize One Big Union of all the workers and overthrow peonage forever in the mills and forests of the South."

A thesis (1951) at Louisiana State University, *The Socialist Vote in Louisiana, 1912: An Historical Interpretation of Radical Sources*, by H. Grady McWhiney, states: "What is even more remarkable is that a considerable number of men were voting for a party supposedly dedicated to destroying the Southern way of life." He notes that in Winn parish, in the cypress belt of Louisiana, the Socialists "elected a school board member and a police juror, as well as an entire slate of municipal officers in the town of Winnfield." In West Carroll Parish another Social-



ist was elected a police juror. In one town in Beauregard Parish, "Debs received more votes than Roosevelt and Taft combined."

But the timber workers' strike was beaten down by the lumber companies, and this promising united front died.

Michigan was early on the scene in the world of Socialist thought. In the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan Library is a copy of the "Platform, Constitution and Resolutions" of the "Socialist Labor Party," published by the "National Executive Committee" in Detroit, Michigan, under date of April, 1880. On the back cover of the document are announcements of pamphlets by A. Douai, Laurence Gronlund, Osborne Ward, Karl Marx, and P.J. McGuire, for sale by the Party's national secretary, Philip Van Patten, in Detroit. Also announced are "Socialist Tracts"—*What is Socialism?*, *What Socialism Means*, *What Socialism Offers*, and so on—authored and published by Judson Grenell of Detroit.

In the Socialist Labor Party days, wrote Frederic Heath in *Socialism in America*, published at the turn of the century, there were 358 Socialist votes in a local Detroit election in 1895; in 1897, in a statewide Michigan election, there were 2,166. A study of this period by Sidney Glazer, *Labor and Agrarian Movements in Michigan, 1876-1896* (Ph.D. dissertation University of Michigan, 1932) shows that there existed a weekly paper, the *Detroit Socialist*, in 1877-78. Another periodical, a monthly, known as the *Three Star*, was set up in 1880 by Joseph Labadie and Judson Grenell to function as the "semi-official organ of the Socialistic Labor Party."

In 1900 Michigan gave 2,826 votes to Debs in his first campaign, and increased this to 23,211 in 1912; in 1916, for Benson, it was 16,120. Besides Flint and Kalamazoo, Michigan chose Socialist mayors in three other cities in 1911; Greenville, South Frankfort, and Wilson. Later, in 1916, a Socialist mayor was chosen in Traverse City. In the years just preceding the Russian Revolution, from 1912 to 1916, the Party's state secretaries were cigar-maker Ben Blumberg of Grand Rapids, shoe merchant Joseph Warnock of Harbor Springs, and shoemaker, John Keracher of Detroit. The Michigan press in the Socialist Party period included a Finnish paper in Hancock, *Tyomes* (1903); the *Progressive Worker*, Holland, (1911); *Peo's Paper*, Kalamazoo (1911); and the *Michigan Socialist*, Detroit (1916).

Some significant theoretical contributions by leaders of the Socialist Party were written between 1900 and 1917. Here is a selected list, chronologically arranged:

1902: W.J. Ghent, *Our Benevolent Feudalism*, Macmillan, New York. Lawrence Goldman says in *Studies on the Left* (#3,

1963) that this book gave Jack London the basis for his novel, *The Iron Heel*.

- 1903: A.M. Simons, *Class Struggles in America*, C. H. Kerr & Co., Chicago. This pamphlet is significant as the first examination of United States history from a more or less Marx-oriented point of view. Completely re-written and expanded, it was published in 1911 by Macmillan as *Social Forces in American History*.
- 1903: Morris Hillquit, *The History of Socialism in the United States*, Funk & Wagnalls, New York. This classic work helped to launch the new Marxist organization, the party of Debs.
- 1904: W.J. Ghent, *Mass and Class*, Macmillan, New York.
- 1906: Joseph Dietzgen, *Philosophical Essays*, C.H. Kerr & Co, Chicago.
- 1906: Joseph Dietzgen, *Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, C.H. Kerr & Co., Chicago. Note: In 1886, before publication of these essays, Dietzgen was an editor of a Socialist Labor Party German-Language paper, and at that time he defended the Haymarket martyrs despite the surrounding reactionary hysteria.
- 1907: Louis B. Boudin, *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, C.H. Kerr & Co., Chicago. With this book, American labor began to show its grasp of scientific socialism. "Its limpidity and clarity of style," says William J. Blake, in *An American Looks at Karl Marx*, "alone would make it noteworthy."
- 1908: Jack London, *Revolution*, a lecture. *Contemporary Review*, New York. Other essays of social comment by Jack London, such as are collected in *Jack London: American Rebel*, edited by Philip S. Foner, might be put alongside *Revolution*.
- 1910: Herman Schlueter, *The Brewery Industry and the Brewery Workers Movement in America*, Union of Brewery Workers, Cincinnati, Ohio. This, a Marxist work, was the first history of a labor union in this country.
- 1910: James Oneal, *The Workers in American History*, National Rip-Saw Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri. A militant exposé of class forces in early American history.
- 1911: Gustavus Myers, *History of Great American Fortunes*, in

three volumes, C. H. Kerr & Co., Chicago. This influential work has inspired several successors by other authors in recent years.

1913: Herman Schlueter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, Socialist Literature Company, New York. In his Preface, Schlueter writes: "The author's standpoint in the treatment of this subject is that of historical materialism, first brought into the science of history by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels."

1915: Scott Nearing, *Anthracite: An Instance of Natural Resource Monopoly*. The John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia. "Dedicated to an order of life in which the chief aim will be happy and noble human beings."

To these might be added some memorable propaganda titles—Marxism-on-the-soapbox:

1905: John M. Work, *What's So and What Isn't*. National office of the Socialist Party: Chicago. Clear, simple, admirable. (In 1918 the same author wrote *Why Things Happen to Happen*, a popular exposition of historical materialism.)

1909: Ben Hanford, *Fight for Your Life*. (Stories and sketches that first appeared in the *New York Call*.) Wilshire Publishing Co., New York.

1909: Oscar Ameringer, *Life and Deeds of Uncle Sam*. Reprint in 1912 by Political Action Company: Milwaukee. Packed with humor and quite a bit of grim truth.

### III

## Marxism and American Trade Unions

A remarkable debate took place on April 4, 1865, at a session of the General Council of the First International, between Karl Marx and John Weston. The debate was to settle once and for all whether a raise in wages was really worth fighting for, and whether trade unions, which struggled to get such raises, brought harm or benefit to working people.

John Weston, a carpenter and a leading Internationalist, brought up the question, going against his own union in saying that a raise in wages was of no use at all, and that labor unions were also useless, or worse. Back of Weston was the noted economist, John Stuart Mill, one of the formulators of the "wages fund" theory.

The question is academic now, and serves only to underscore one of the services Marx performed for trade unions in general. He demolished the Weston-Mill argument, provided an unassailable theory for the economic struggles of the workers, and justified the existence of unions.

The "wages fund" idea was that at any given time there was a definitely limited amount of money for the payment of wages, an amount that could not be increased. If a strike did by chance win a raise in pay, the capitalists would raise prices, and the workers would win nothing. This "wages fund" idea was really identical with the so-called "iron law of wages" believed in by Ferdinand Lassalle, which in turn explains why the Lassalleans had no faith in trade unions, relying solely on "political" activities. The Marxists also used political action, but preferred to have strong unions as a foundation.

Marx began his counter-argument by praising Weston's "moral courage" in taking a stand unpopular among workers. He added, with the courtesy he always showed to fellow workers: "I hope that, despite the unvarnished style of my paper, at its conclusion he will find me agreeing



with what appears to me the just idea lying at the bottom of his theses, which, however, in their present form, I cannot but consider theoretically false and practically dangerous."

The debate was easily won by Marx, but the paper he read was never published until his daughter Eleanor Aveling found it long after his death and gave it to the world as *Value, Price and Profit*.

The very next year after this debate, at the first congress of the First International, in Geneva, Marx went further. "The immediate task of the trade unions," he said, in a report, "is restricted to the needs of the daily struggle between labor and capital—in a word, to questions of wages and working hours." But that was not all, and could not be all, for "the trade unions involuntarily become organizing centers for the working class." While they are "indispensable in the daily struggle," he said, "still more important is their other aspect as instruments for transforming the system of wage labor and for overthrowing the dictatorship of capital."

This was in truth but a re-statement of the advice he had already given trade unions in the second part of the debate with Weston: "Instead of the conservative motto: 'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the wages system!'"

How to bring about this higher consciousness in trade unions and among trade unionists has for a century been the thorniest problem for Marxists, but there have been successes as well as failures.

Higher wages and shorter hours were the two general tasks Marx gave to unions in the day-to-day struggle. The matter of wages was handled in *Value, Price and Profit*. The question of hours was dealt with in Chapter X of *Capital*: "The Working Day."

Marx began by asking, "What is a working day?" The answer, so far as capitalist ideas went—as American workers have confirmed a thousand times over—was a day of "very elastic nature," days of "8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 hours, i.e., of the most different lengths." What this meant was that the workers *had* to fight for shorter hours. Said Marx: "In place of the pompous catalogue of the 'inalienable rights of man' comes the modest Magna Carta of a *legally limited working-day*, which shall make clear 'when the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins.'"

Marx, expressed pleasure at the decision of the National Labor Union of the United States to fight for an 8-hour day. The two Congresses—the First International in Geneva and the first national federation of American workers in Baltimore—were meeting at about the same time (1866), and both adopted resolutions on the subject. Said the American labor body—"Eight hours shall be the normal working day in all states of the

American Union." Said the International, speaking for the workers of all the world—"Eight hours should be the legal limit of the working day."

The *Manifesto* was primarily a political document, but it recognized the necessity of forming "combinations [trade unions] against the bourgeoisie," and it indicated the general attitude that a Marxist party should take toward trade unions. Marx and Engels told the various socialist parties that they had "no interests separate and apart" from the proletariat, and that therefore, while they kept an eye on, and worked for, "the future" of the workers, i.e., socialism, they should not neglect the fight for immediate aims, the workers' "momentary interests."

After the transfer of the First International to New York, its American leaders, such as F.A. Sorge, continued to emphasize, as Marx had done, the importance of organized labor. In 1874, writes Samuel Bernstein in *First International in America*, they pointed out, in a discussion with Chicago Lassalleans, that "the trade unions provide the first troops in the class struggle, for their members combine as wage earners against their exploiters." And, they went on, this combining leads to politics. Economic conditions, they explained, were "pushing the trade unions on to the correct path, from the economic to the political struggle against the propertied classes." Unionists were obliged, as time went on, to use more than the strike weapon: they were compelled to demand laws in their favor, and to elect political representatives who would adopt and enforce those laws.

The First International in the United States did a great deal more, however, than defend the mere *existence* of trade unions: it raised money for strikes conducted by unions, and, in some instances, went to the trouble of directly *organizing* unions. Bernstein gives the example of the Furniture Workers Association, "set up by the First International," a union which, he said, "stoutly protected the interests of workers."

The same author cites numerous examples of assistance to striking trade unionists. "American workers' groups had already learned of the International's spreading influence and were asking its help," he writes. The striking horse-car conductors of New York City requested the General Council to publicize their appeal, "To the Impartial, Intelligent and Sympathizing People of the City of New York." The conductors were protesting a 106-hour work week! Their appeal was promptly printed in both English and German socialist newspapers.

Among these pros and cons it should not be forgotten that the American leaders of the International were themselves workers and active trade unionists. It was an accepted rule that each one join the union of his trade. Fred Bolte was a cigarmaker; Carl Speyer, a cabinet maker and secretary of the Furniture Workers' Union; F. A. Sorge, a musician; J. P.

McDonnell, journalist, who had been on the old General Council in London, became an organizer of Irish workers while in the First International in New York; Simon Dereure, veteran Communard, was a shoemaker; C. Osborne Ward, former machinist, was a journalist; Conrad Carl, a tailor; etc.

Another citation from Bernstein will serve as a summary of the International's direct help to trade unions: "The record of the Committee shows its dedication to the cause of the workers. It urged the sections to organize them; it sent aid to strikers; it argued the cause of labor, never failing to point out that its welfare was the concern of the International."

An examination of the chief trade unions that arose in the United States after the American Civil War shows how the Marxist influence expressed itself, through leadership, ideas, aims and activities, right up to 1917.

The National Labor Union, founded in 1866 by the leader of the Iron Molders, William H. Sylvis, was the first national federation of trade unions in this country, and, as said above, it was praised by Marx for its stand on behalf of the 8-hour day. In her monograph, *William H. Sylvis and the National Labor Union*, Charlotte Todes says there were 77 delegates from 13 states, ten of them officers of national unions, at its organizing convention in Baltimore, showing the real importance of this union in the history of American organized labor.

This Union is also important for the progressive precedents it set for all future American labor. These included its valiant struggle for the 8-hour day (which won concessions from President Grant); its alert recognition of inter-national opportunities and responsibilities; its welcome to Negro labor and to women labor, and its opposition to the military and to monopoly.

Sylvis, the leading spirit of the National Labor Union, and his co-worker, William J. Jessup, head of the New York State Workingman's Assembly, were fully aware of the work of the First International abroad, and kept in close touch with it. Sylvis often declared that "the interests of labor are identical throughout the world." In a speech before his own Molders' Union he argued for "an alliance with trade organizations throughout the world." Again, as recorded by Herman Schlueter in *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, Sylvis told the International in 1869: "We have a common cause. It is the war of poverty against wealth. In all parts of the world labor occupies the same lowly position, capital is everywhere the same tyrant." And Jessup, acting for the New York Ship Joiners, contacted the London Society of Carpenters and Joiners, of which R. Applegarth was the head, to propose that the two organizations, located

on opposite shores of the Atlantic, be amalgamated. Applegarth was one of those who helped establish the First International.

At the same time, the leading labor journals of this country, the *National Workman* of New York and the *Workingmen's Advocate* of Chicago, regularly printed news about the First International. The latter paper published the *Address* of the International Working Men's Association, drafted by Marx, and ran Marx's *Civil War in France* (a discussion of the Paris Commune) serially in its columns. It also published many articles by William Liebknecht, the leading Marxist of Germany. The *National Workman* similarly gave American workers full information about European labor affairs, including the decisions and proclamations of the International.

Marx himself wrote, in a letter to an American friend, Siegfried Meyer, July 4, 1868: "We are in direct communication with Whaley, Sylvis, and Jessup." This "Whaley" was J. C. C. Whaley, first president of the National Labor Union and a member of the First International.

Furthermore, the First International was to some degree organizationally intertwined with the National Labor Union. "Section 1 of New York was the most active body of the First International in the United States," wrote James S. Allen in *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy*, and added: "The Section was also affiliated to the National Labor Union as Labor Union No. 5." This constituted a direct Marxist voice within organized labor in this country. F. A. Sorge, soon-to-be secretary of the First International when it located in New York, was a member of Labor Union No. 5, in 1869.

Thus, it was natural for Sylvis to respond warmly to greetings from the First International, and to its invitation to the N.L.U. to send a delegate to Europe. There was not time at this first gathering to send such a representative, but the reply of the N.L.U. to the men of the International bade them "Godspeed in their glorious work." At the second N.L.U. congress, in 1867, President Jessup moved to affiliate with the International, and Sylvis supported the motion—which, however, was voted down. Nevertheless, while backing away from direct affiliation, the congress chose a delegate to attend the International's next congress. The man chosen was Richard F. Trevellick, head of the Detroit Trades Assembly—but he could not collect money enough to make the trip. Finally, in 1869, the N.L.U. elected A.C. Cameron, editor of the *Workingmen's Advocate*, as delegate to the International Congress at Basle, and he did attend and take part in the discussions.

In 1870, in Washington, D.C., the *National Colored Labor Union*, which had broken away from the National Labor Union, also elected a delegate to the Congress of the International scheduled to meet in Paris.



His name was Sella Martin, a Negro unionist from Massachusetts, but he—like Trevellick earlier—could not raise the money to go.

It was in 1869 that Sylvis died suddenly at the age of forty-one, an event that saddened American labor and brought from the International Marx's letter of condolence, describing Sylvis as "a loyal, persevering and indefatigable worker in the good cause."

In 1870, after Sylvis' death, the N.L.U. adopted a resolution which read as follows: "The National Labor Union declares its adherence to the principles of the International Working Men's Association, and expects to join the said Association in a short time."

Unfortunately, the expectation was never realized. The N.L.U.'s membership, and its leadership, too, during its brief but important four-year rise, were simultaneously looking at Greenbackism as well as Marxism. Greenbackism or a policy of inflation seemed attractive at the time, and the Union collapsed.

Nevertheless, the first nation-wide labor federation, the National Labor Union, supplied the progressive traditions that, in every economic crisis of our history, have sustained American working men. These traditions of struggle were in large measure sparked by Marxism. "It can be claimed with confidence," wrote Samuel Bernstein, "that American labor leaders who had passed through the school of the International were the best protagonists of the American trade union movement."

The magnificent but brief career of the Marx-influenced National Labor Union (1866-1871) was followed by two other broad leagues of labor: The Knights of Labor, organized in 1869; and the International Labor Union, in 1877.

Although the Knights of Labor was founded earlier, it started out as a secret order, and did not become dominant until several years had passed; but the second organization, the International Labor Union, was in many ways a direct successor of the National Labor Union, in aim, principles, and personnel.

The International Labor Union was a merger of the former members of the old International with followers of Ira Steward's Eight-Hour movement. Its founders included the Marxists, F.A. Sorge, who had been general secretary of the First International; J.P. McDonnell, editor of the Socialist Labor Party paper, *The Labor Standard*; Dr. Adolph Douai, co-editor of the *New-Yorker Volkszeitung*; and Otto Weydemeyer, son of Joseph Weydemeyer; and the non-Marxists, Ira Steward and George Gunton; George E. McNeill, a Christian socialist; Albert R. Parsons, syndicalist-inclined socialist; and others. Karl Speyer, an old Internationalist and associate of Sorge, was elected secretary of the International Labor Union.

The I.L.U.'s Declaration of Principles said "the wage system is a despotism" and called for "final abolition of the wage system". It argued that the "first step towards the emancipation of labor" would be a shorter workday. To win shorter hours the I.L.U. called for creation of unions "where none exist", and the "amalgamation of all Labor Unions", along with the establishment of "a general fund for benefit and protective purposes."

The I.L.U., even more than the N.L.U., was friendly to Negroes and women. It carried on many historic labor battles. The I.L.U. led the Fall River textile strike in 1878-79, which Philip Foner described as "one of the greatest in American history."

But the Union's resources were insufficient, and the times were not ripe. The I.L.U., like the N.L.U. before it, lasted only about five years. Its thousands of members, wrote Foner, "were to carry their labor solidarity and class consciousness into the organization of the Knights of Labor."

The Knights of Labor did not have the organizational Marxist ties that the other two unions had. To be sure, it is said that its founder, Uriah S. Stephens, a tailor, had read a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* given him by a fellow tailor, George Eccarius, who was the first general secretary of the London International. Stephens was in part guided by the *Manifesto* when he organized the Knights, the story claims. As a matter of fact the Order did stress labor solidarity, and aimed to achieve "the complete emancipation of the wealth producers from the thralldom and loss of wage slavery." The Knights of Labor admitted all men and women to membership, "of every craft, creed and color."

Stephens' successor, Terence V. Powderly, wrote in his autobiography, *Thirty Years of Labor*: "In 1880, Osborne Ward, a socialist, lectured in Scranton [of which Powderly was then the Mayor] to an outdoor audience, and I presided at the meeting. . . . I wished to hear all sides, and . . . was well pleased with his exposition of the principles of the party he represented." In another place Powderly wrote, "The aim of socialism, in a word, is to make the world better."

However, the Knights of Labor was a ritualistic secret Order; its spokesmen did not oppose capitalism as an economic system, nor indicate any wish to abolish it; and in general it held aloof from the socialist movement. Neither Stephens, who was Grand Master until 1879, nor his successor, Powderly, were really socialistic.

Powderly did, to be sure, join the Socialist Labor Party at one time; but he soon left, and later denied he had ever joined! On the other hand—however we regard Stephens and Powderly as individuals—it is nevertheless a fact that a good many Marxists joined the organization that they headed, and were active and influential members of it.

German-born Theodore F. Cuno, engineer, journalist, member of the First International, and a friend and correspondent of Frederick Engels, joined the Knights of Labor in the 1870's and became a respected leader in it.

Phillip Van Patten, first general secretary of the Socialist Labor Party and also Secretary of the Socialist-organized and socialist-controlled Central Labor Union of New York, joined the Knights of Labor in 1881. In New York, says Morris Hillquit in his *History of Socialism*, "one Local Assembly, known as the 'Excelsior Club,' was composed almost exclusively of socialists," and many other K. of L. local assemblies were sympathetic to socialism.

The activity of Socialists in the K. of L. is instanced by the Jay Gould railroad strike of 1885. The Knights Local Assembly 3218, which had been organized by the socialist editor, Joseph R. Buchanan, threw itself into support of the strike. Buchanan's influential socialist paper, *The Labor Inquirer* of Denver, publicized the demands of the railroad workers. Only needless surrender by Powderly himself prevented a great strike victory.

Another instance is that of Martin Irons, socialist chairman of District Assembly 101, who led the K. of L. strike in the Texas & Pacific railroad shops in 1886—only to be defeated by Powderly's betrayal. Such well-known Socialist Labor Party members and propagandists as Jo Labadie and Judson Grennell of Michigan were at the same time members and critics of the Knights of Labor.

Half a decade after the Buchanan-Irons achievements, when Daniel De Leon became Socialist Labor Party leader, the entire New York K. of L. District Assembly, known as "D.A. 49," came for a time under the leadership of the Socialists (until De Leon himself organized a dual union). During this period Lucian Sanial was the S.L.P. candidate for editor of the Knights of Labor's journal, and so strong was the Socialist sector in the Union that the Knights' leadership was obliged to promise him the job—but reneged on it afterward.

Oscar Ameringer, Socialist editor and historian, was a member of the K. of L. in his younger days. So was John Mahlon Barnes, who years later originated the Debs "Red Special".

Socialists were active in other unions besides the giant Knights of Labor. Foner cites the following: The Jewish Workingmen's Union of New York was formed under Socialist Leadership in 1885. In its organ, the weekly *Jewish Volkszeitung*, it published Marx's *Wage-Labor and Capital*, as well as other Socialist material deemed important to the Union. Another and larger Socialist-led New York union, the United Hebrew Trades, was organized in 1888, and is notable for the fact the

future Socialist Party leader, Morris Hillquit, a shirt-maker, was its corresponding secretary. This Union adopted an advanced Marxist constitution and program. Socialists in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston organized affiliates of the United Hebrew Trades. Still another New York socialist-organized union about this time was the United German Trades, which supported Socialist Labor Party candidates for office and circulated Socialist papers and pamphlets.

It was not only Jewish and German trade unions that were influenced by the Socialists. The *Bulletin of the Socialist Labor Party* stated in 1880 that the establishment of city central labor bodies all over the country was "accomplished mainly by the efforts of Socialists who influence and in some places control these assemblies, and are respected in all of them."

In Chicago, Albert R. Parsons, a printer, was both a leading Socialist and a leader of organized labor. His story is told in Alan Calmer's *Labor Agitator*. Parsons helped organize the Amalgamated Trade and Labor Unions in 1878, and was elected its president.

"The role of the Socialist Labor Party," wrote Foner in an apt summary, "in founding national unions, in organizing city central bodies, and in building local unions . . . was an outstanding contribution to the developing American labor movement."

The successor to the Knights of Labor, with respect to size and influence, was the American Federation of Labor, founded in 1881. Its organizers were led to act by an editorial in a Socialist paper, the *Newark Home-Journal*, which urged the convening of a "Congress of labor" which should undertake "the organization of the unorganized."

The resulting call that was sent throughout the country by a group of unions added to "organization of the unorganized" the amalgamation of existing unions "so as to more successfully cope with concentrated capital." One hundred seven delegates in the organizing body in Pittsburgh represented the Molders (Sylvie's old union); the Carpenters (organized by Peter J. McGuire, who had been a founder of the Socialist Labor Party); the Printers; the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers; the Glass Workers; the Cigar Makers (led by Samuel Gompers and Adolf Strasser); and a number of local assemblies of the Knights of Labor.

The Preamble adopted unanimously by the convention declared that "a struggle is going on in the nations of the civilized world between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between capital and labor," and for that reason "a union founded upon a basis as broad as the land we live in, is our only hope."

Three years later the secretary of the Federation, Frank K. Foster, added a stronger note to the internationalism of the Preamble in an



official communication to the French Socialist unions: "Labor knows no country," he wrote, "and the laborers of the world should clasp hands for their common weal." To his own people—the Fourth Congress of the Federation—Foster said, in an address: "A federation of the workers of the world has long been the dream of idealists; it remains with you to make it a reality."

Among those who from the first took a prominent part in the Federation was Samuel Gompers of the Cigar Makers, who tells in his autobiography, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor*, of his friendship and admiration for the men of the First International, naming especially F. A. Sorge, Konrad Carl, Karl Speyer, Fred Bolte, and J. P. McDonnell.

"I became much interested in the International, for its principles appealed to me as solid and practical," Gompers writes, but adds: "I never joined." Nevertheless he describes these Marxists thus: "Brainy men who reveled in life as a test of ability, men who dared as a matter of course." He sums up his views in the following words, as quoted by J.R. Commons: "I believe with the most advanced thinkers as to ultimate ends, including the abolition of the wage-system."

The four men spoken of here—Samuel Gompers, Peter J. McGuire, Adolf Strasser and W. H. Foster—were leaders of the American Federation of Labor for a generation. Of these, McGuire (a Lassallean) had been a member of the Socialist Labor Party, and Strasser (also a Lassallean) likewise. But Strasser and McGuire, and Foster too, like Gompers, became pure-and-simple trade unionists in their pursuit of business-style unionism.

It is clear, then, that Marxist ideas favorably influenced the Federation and its leaders in some of their basic programs and policies. It can also be affirmed that individual Marxists contributed—as they did earlier to the Knights of Labor—a great part of the Federation's organizing enthusiasm and working-class consciousness.

The presence of individual Marxists as Federation members, and the contributions they made, are especially noteworthy.

A. C. Cameron, one of the founders of the old National Labor Union, and that union's delegate to the Basle Congress of the First International—not strictly a Marxist, but Marx-influenced—was a delegate to the Federation's 1884 convention. He voted *Yes* on the historic call to make the 8-hour day start on May 1st, 1886.

This action of the A.F.L. demanding a workday of no more than eight hours was the origin of May Day as an international workers' holiday. The A.F.L. repeated this demand twice more: in 1887 and 1888. In 1889 the organizing congress of the Second International in Paris received a message from Gompers urging that May Day be made "an International

Labor Day," and the Paris Congress agreed. Its resolution called for world-wide demonstrations on May 1st for the 8-hour day, "Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon . . . by the American Federation of Labor." May Day, the only world-wide holiday, was American-born.

Max Hayes, printer and longtime editor of the *Cleveland Citizen*, was both a national leader of the Socialist movement and a national leader of the Federation. His paper, the *Citizen*, was simultaneously an official organ of the American Federation of Labor and of the Socialist Party. In 1899, Hayes introduced into an A.F.L. convention a resolution which was adopted, urging study of trusts and monopolies, "with the view to nationalizing the same." In 1912, Hayes ran for president of the A.F.L. against Gompers, getting 5,073 votes against 11,974 for Gompers.

In that same election, another Socialist head of a union, William H. Johnston, ran for 3rd vice president, and received 6,171 votes, against his successful opponent who got 10,858.

These votes indicate the significant strength of the Socialists in the A.F.L. The constituent unions supporting the Socialists are stated in a 1960 Master's thesis at Duke University written by Alice Joyner Irby: "Backing the Socialists were such powerful unions as the Brewery Workers, the Typographical Union, the Hat & Cap Makers, the Bakery Workers, the Machinists, the Mine Workers (except Mitchell), the Western Federation of Miners, the Painters, the Glass Workers, the Boilermakers, and the Iron Shipbuilders."

The Typographical Union here mentioned had Max Hayes himself in its leadership. In 1902, says *Labor's Untold Story* (Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais), the W.F.M. adopted this resolution: "We . . . do advise and recommend the adoption of the platform of the Socialist Party by the locals of the Federation . . ." The Brewery Workers had already by 1912 had their history written by the Marxist, Herman Schlueter. Among the Cigar-Workers (not listed by Miss Irby) have been numbered scores and hundreds of Socialists, including British-born John J. Ballam and American-born Ben Blumberg, old-time propagandists.

In 1901 the Socialist Party organizing convention at Indianapolis adopted a resolution saying, "We consider it the duty of Socialists to join the unions of their respective trade and labor organizations." At every convention and congress thereafter it was routine practice to issue statistics on the proportion of Socialist Party members who were trade-union members, showing that a majority were bona fide organized workers. The Socialist Party Convention of 1912, in its Resolution on Labor Organizations, reaffirmed the duty of the members "who are eligible to membership in the unions to join and be active." The resolution also said it was

the "duty of the party to give moral and material support to the labor organizations in all their defensive or aggressive struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation." In that year, wrote William Z. Foster in his *History of the Communist Party of the United States*: "The [Socialist] party had a powerful base in the trade unions."

The Socialist Party regularly sent lecturers to address union members, gave financial aid to workers on strike, and publicized workers' grievances and demands. Socialist Party members walked on picket lines with strikers, distributed leaflets, solicited signatures on petitions, and helped in the defense of arrested unionists.

Any study of the great defense campaigns, as the successful Moyer-Pettibone-Haywood struggle, or the long fight for Tom Mooney's release, or the martyrdom of the McNamara brothers, bears out the above statement. All three cases concerned members of A.F.L. affiliates.

In 1905, Charles H. Moyer, president of the Western Federation of Miners, William D. Haywood, secretary-treasurer, and George A. Pettibone, a miner, were kidnapped in Colorado by boss hirelings and taken to Idaho to be falsely charged with the murder of former Governor Frank Steunenberg. Eugene V. Debs, head of the Socialist Party, wrote his celebrated editorial, "Arouse Ye Slaves," in defense of the three men. They were finally freed. Thomas J. Mooney, a member of the Molders Union and organizer of the Street Car Men of San Francisco, was convicted through bribery and perjury in a bomb-throwing case in 1916 and, after many years in San Quentin prison, was finally set free. James and John McNamara, leaders of the Structural Iron Workers, were convicted through trickery of a dynamiting charge in 1911 and sentenced to life terms. Haywood and Mooney were both for some years leading Socialists. The Socialist Party fought valiantly on behalf of all of these men, and on behalf of many similar cases.

Noteworthy were three outstanding examples of Marxist-trade unionist interaction: The American Railway Union; the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union; and the Industrial Workers of the World.

The American Railway Union was organized and headed by Eugene V. Debs, in 1894, before he became a socialist. The story of the celebrated Pullman strike, the intervention of the Government on the side of the railway companies, the imprisonment of Debs, and Debs' gradual acceptance of Marxist socialism constitute a well-known chapter in our industrial history. The American Railway Union itself—what was left of it—also joined the Marxist-led movement as one of the groups which merged to found the Socialist Party in 1900-1901.

The history of the Amalgamated Woodworkers International Union of America goes back to 1873, when the First International set up the

Furniture Workers Association. The later history of the woodworkers is given in fair detail by Frederick Shipp Deibler in a doctor's dissertation in 1912 at the University of Wisconsin. "The Amalgamated Union," wrote Deibler, "inherited its political attitude as well as its social philosophy from the Furniture Workers' Union." This attitude and philosophy Deibler accurately described as "socialistic."

In 1885 the *Furniture Workers Journal* stated that the evils of capitalism could be overcome: "By placing machinery, like all other means of labor, within the reach and into the possession of *those who are using them*; or, better, into the *collective possession of all*, in order to enable the workman to participate in the blessings produced by labor-saving machinery and increased commodities of every kind."

In the year before (1894), the Furniture Workers had already adopted formally the following resolution:

Whereas, a permanent transformation of this social system, which exists for the benefit of a few and the detriment of the many, can only be brought about by independent political action of the wage working class, therefore be it

Resolved, That the 9th Convention of the International Furniture Workers of America call upon its members to turn their backs upon all capitalist boodles parties, and wherever possible to attach themselves to an independent labor party, based upon the platform of the Socialist Labor party, and to be active in this direction.

This provision was retained in 1904 in the Constitution of the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union, which was a merger of the Furniture Workers and the Machine Woodworkers.

Finally comes the Industrial Workers of the World, organized in 1905 by the leading socialists in the country: Daniel De Leon of the Socialist Labor Party, and Eugene V. Debs and William D. Haywood of the Socialist Party. Associated with them were Charles H. Moyer, Mother Jones, and Lucy Parsons (Mrs. Albert R. Parsons). Not long afterward other Marxist-minded militants were associated with the Wobblies: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, John Reed, and Joe Hill, to name but three.

Aside from the people involved, the Preamble of the I.W.W., written by Daniel De Leon, shows its Marxist ideological basis:

There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold



that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party.

The final clause gives an opening for syndicalism, somewhat altering the Marxist conception of workers' seizure of power, and a few years later the syndicalists did indeed dominate the I.W.W.\*

\*For additional data, see appendix C.

## IV

### *Marxism and Reform Legislation*

When Samuel Gompers and Morris Hillquit confronted each other in New York, in May 1914, as witnesses before the Commission on Industrial Relations, an argument developed. Gompers claimed the American Federation of Labor was first to fight for legislation favorable to workers, and that the Socialist Party had stuck labor demands in its platform later, just as "vote catchers." In his autobiography, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life*, written years later, Hillquit returns to the argument and expands on his reply to Gompers. "Historically, Mr. Gompers was quite wrong. The principal planks I enumerated in my examination had been formulated by the Socialist movement in the days of the First International, i.e., in the seventies of the last century and long before the organization of the American Federation of Labor." Historical records confirm Hillquit's statement.

In 1848, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels insisted on political action by the workers. This was one respect in which they differentiated themselves from the Utopians, Owen and Fourier. Owen actually opposed the Chartists of England, who had advanced their "People's Charter" of government reform. Fourier likewise opposed the *Reformistes* of France. The *Manifesto* gives a ten-point program of measures suggested as "pretty generally applicable" when workers in any country take over political control. This included the income tax (on the rich), abolition of the right of inheritance (of big property), control of credit through a national bank, cultivation of waste lands, improvement of the soil, "free education for all children in public schools," and "abolition of child factory labor." These, combined with the eight-hour day and a bigger wage, as advocated in *Value, Price and Profit*, provided a general basis for a working-class political platform, short-term as well as

long-term. In fact the *Manifesto* (in another section) indicates as much in speaking of the "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims" of the workers.

In 1850, in the *Address of the General Council to the Communist League*, Marx gave advice to the revolutionary workers' movement in Germany, urging them to pressure the petty bourgeois political party toward more and more reforms. The workers could not yet "propose any directly communist measures," but the petty bourgeoisie would be "compelled to propose more or less socialist measures."

We may recall that Joseph Weydemeyer, Marx's best known representative in the United States, was active in the Republican Party campaign for the election of Lincoln in 1860. He worked through the Chicago Workers' Society, which, says Weydemeyer's biographer, Karl Obermann, "asked every Republican candidate to state his position on . . . better labor legislation." Weydemeyer was applying Marxist thinking to the American conditions of that time.

In 1865, when the First International was established in London, Marx, in his *Inaugural Address*, discussed the insufficient diet of the British poor, the employment and oppression of British children, and the revelation in the Government's reported tax returns of deepening class division in British society. He praised the Ten Hour Bill as an important beginning of reform, and denounced British industry, "which, vampire-like, could but live by sucking blood, and children's blood, too."

The *Address* also advised workers to delve into foreign policy—"to master themselves the mysteries of international politics." In doing this they must, he said, "watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments," and if they couldn't prevent barbarous encroachments, at least they could denounce them, and thus "vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern . . . the intercourse of nations."

In sum, as the *Address* adds (*Provisional Rules*), it is "the duty of a man to claim the rights of a man and a citizen."

In the United States, these principles were applied in more specific detail by American members of the First International, as shown by the work of the American branches of the International up to 1872.

The Central Committee of the American sections, according to Samuel Bernstein, in his *First International in America*, praised the American workers' resolve to press for labor legislation. Noteworthy is the parade of workers in New York on September 13, 1871, in which the American branches of the International had a large contingent carrying the red flag. The demonstration concluded with resolutions for the eight-hour day, against convict labor, against the spread of monopolies, and for the administration of public utilities. It was at this demonstration that a

leaflet quoting an excerpt from Marx's *Capital* on the "normal working day" was distributed "in thousands of copies."

A little later<sup>1</sup> the American Internationalists fought through to success what we may call the *first* "First Amendment case": a memorial demonstration honoring the Paris Commune and the murdered Communards. The police had issued a ban on the march down Fifth Avenue, but, says Bernstein, they "had to cancel the previous order." The Internationalists based their demand to march on the constitutional right of peaceful assembly.

Immediately after these events came the historically notable episode in which Congressman George F. Hoar of Massachusetts referred with approval to the First International. He had himself introduced a bill providing for appointment of a wages and hours commission, and, in the words of Bernstein, "he had the clerk of the House read [the International's] resolution that called for a statistical survey of the workers' situation in Europe and America."

A few months after this action by Congressman Hoar, the International itself was transferred to New York by decision of the Hague Congress. Here, wrote Bernstein, "One of the first plans to cope with the problem of unemployment" was presented to the government by the International. The plan, offered in 1873, demanded: (1) Work for the unemployed at usual wages; (2) enough food in advance to feed needy families for a week; and (3) a six-months' moratorium on rent.

In 1874 the First International, in New York, announced that its political action for the time being would be confined to "the endeavor of obtaining legislative acts in the interest of the working class proper." The program called for a working day of not more than eight hours, employers' liability for accidents, a lien law to guarantee payment of workers' wages, abolition of child labor, sanitary inspection of factories, bureaus of labor statistics, and prohibition of indirect taxes.

The above list includes the establishment of bureaus of labor statistics as a beneficial measure for the working class. This is in accord with the "statistical survey" which pleased Congressman Hoar. It is fascinating to note how detailed was the plan devised for such a survey, as given in the *Papers of the International Workingmen's Association*, edited and commented on by Samuel Bernstein. The plan called for Name, Trade, Age, Sex of Workers, Hours of labor, Time for meals, Number unemployed, Number in family, et cetera. It asked questions, as, Are the children in school? It inquired about "peculiar diseases of trade."

It is important to note the ways in which the followers of Marx strove

1. December 10 and December 17, 1871.



to get legal concessions from the federal and state governments to benefit the workers. First, they sought new laws, such as an eight-hour day; second, they struggled to maintain those constitutional rights which employers and politicians disregarded, as the right of peaceful assembly; third, they tried by the widest publicity to bring about a more humane political climate for changed laws, as in the arguments against child labor.

The First International is to be credited with a share in two partial successes: the eight-hour day was legally established for most government workers in President U. S. Grant's Administration (1868-1869), through pressure by the National Labor Union<sup>2</sup> supported by the International; and state bureaus of labor statistics began to be set up about that time in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, and slowly spread to other states.

But even more weight will be given the International's achievements in the field of social legislation if we consider that the struggle continued under its Marxist successors (the Socialist Labor and Socialist Parties), that its cogent arguments proved their validity to more and more people, and that more and more of its proposals for immediate relief were taken over by capitalist parties and enacted into law (however limited such laws often were in practice).

The Workingmen's Party of the United States, founded in 1876, included in its Declaration of Principles not only its aim of emancipation of workers from capitalism, and its consequent independence of all capitalist parties, but also a platform of immediate measures "to improve the condition of the working classes." These included the eight-hour day in private industry (as well as government employment), sanitary inspection of mines and factories, a federal bureau of labor statistics, prohibition of prison contract labor, prohibition of child labor under the age of fourteen, free public schools, free administration of justice, "strict laws making employers liable for all accidents to the injury of their employees," and abolition of antiunion conspiracy laws.

When in 1878 the organization's name was changed to the Socialist Labor Party, the party constitution was altered, but these immediate demands were substantially retained. By 1879 there were some additions. One new demand was "political equality before the law, of all citizens, without regard to creed, race, or sex." Another was "the establishment of a national ministry of labor."

2. The National Labor Union sent Richard Trelvellick—the one who had been unable to go to the Lausanne Congress of the First International in 1867—to Washington in 1868 to urge an eight-hour law for government employees. The law was enacted, but the pay was reduced. Finally, "moved by a storm of protest from the working people, led by Sylvis, Cameron, Trelvellick and Jessup" (Commons), President Grant issued a proclamation on May 19, 1869, stating there would be no cut in wages for the shorter day for government workers.

Phillip Van Patten, general secretary, made an important report to the second Socialist Labor Party convention, which began December 26, 1879, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and referred proudly to some of the three-year-old Party's successes. Three Illinois state representatives and one Illinois state senator had been elected the previous year,<sup>3</sup> he said, and continued: "During their first term they introduced bills to enforce the payment of wages in cash, prohibiting children's labor and the employment of convict labor by private individuals, a bill to license locomotive engineers, to enforce the eight-hour law already on the statute books, to create a bureau of labor statistics [in Illinois], to secure proper ventilation in the mines, to make employers responsible for injuries to employees while at work, and a number of other important measures. Most of these were killed either by direct vote or by amendments which destroyed their efficiency. The bureau of labor statistics was however established, and good results [were] hoped for."

In the city of Chicago the Party had done well too, he said. The candidate for mayor was Dr. Ernest Schmidt, "an old associate of Karl Marx," and, although defeated, he had gotten 12,000 votes. One of Dr. Schmidt's co-workers, "Comrade Fred Stauber," was elected alderman from the 14th ward, and he "did good service in the city council, by exposing frauds and corrupt jobs dating back a number of years." According to Alan Calmer's *Labor Agitator: The Story of Albert R. Parsons*, Stauber "initiated many practical benefits, such as public baths, for the workers in his ward," and was reelected the next year.

In this convention report Van Patten also briefly surveyed some half-dozen state bureaus of labor statistics, calling them "valuable institutions." Some—like that of Massachusetts—were "too timid," but others—like that of Ohio—were truthful and thorough. In the state of Missouri, he noted, the new bureau of labor statistics was "under the management of Comrades Hilkene and P. J. McGuire."<sup>4</sup> It was anticipated, Van Patten said, that the coming 1880 census would reflect data from these newly established bureaus.

Scarcely three years after this historic convention, a hearing on "Relations between Labor and Capital" was held before the Blair Committee of the United States Senate, and some new legislative ideas were brought to public notice by the Socialists. Dr. Adolf Douai was the spokesman of the

3. The representatives were C. Ehrhardt, C. Meier, and Leo Meilbeck; the senator was Sylvester Artley.

4. One of the pamphlets for sale by the S.L.P. National Office, and advertised in the leaflet containing the minutes of the convention, was "Why the State Should Create a Bureau of Labor Statistics," by P. J. McGuire. As for Hilkene, the Missouri Historical Society reports (in a letter to me, Nov. 21, 1963) that in 1880-81 William H. Hilkene was State Labor Commissioner of Missouri.

Socialist Labor Party before the Committee,<sup>5</sup> September 20, 1883. His testimony, according to Charles R. Martin's *Handbook of the Independent Order of the Knights of Labor* "contains the first elaboration of the idea of the Initiative and Referendum made in the United States."

In his testimony, Dr. Douai also made an interesting comment on the S.L.P. demand for prohibition of the labor of children under the age of fourteen. "You know," he told the Committee chairman, Senator H. W. Blair of New Hampshire, "that this has been secured in the State of New Jersey, chiefly through the action of our party."

In 1889, another convention of the S.L.P. took place, this time in Chicago, at which a new campaign platform was drawn up by the Communard, Lucien Sanial. Hillquit praised it, saying it "was given a national coloring by basing its arguments on the Declaration of Independence."

Adopted as a "state platform," this document began:

When a body of citizens separate themselves from existing political organizations of age, respectability and historic achievement and form a party pledged to measures inconsistent with societary institutions of long standing and of widely accepted worth, it is incumbent upon them to justify their conduct by evidence of such weight and character as shall satisfy the impartial judgment of thoughtful men of the rectitude of their purposes and of the public need of the reforms they advocate.

After a brief socialist analysis of United States' economic history, a program is given which follows previous ones but expands and particularizes some demands: Make members of Congress "subject to recall"; "give the people the right to propose laws"; "confer universal and equal right of suffrage . . . and secret ballot"; "abolish capital punishment"; "prohibition of night work for women"; "scientific management of forests and waterways"; "compulsory education of all children . . . to be gratuitous."

When Daniel De Leon joined the S.L.P. in 1890, the Party still put forward "immediate demands," as shown by the 1892 platform on which Simon Wing and Charles H. Matchett were the first presidential and vice presidential candidates to campaign for the Cooperative Commonwealth. It repeated the 1889 proposals, and also asked that "inventors . . . be remunerated by the nation," that a "progressive income tax" be imposed, also a "tax on inheritances," "repeal of all pauper, tramp, conspiracy and

5. United States Senate, "Report upon the Relations between Labor and Capital," *Blair Committee Report*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1885), pp. 702-743.

sumptuary laws," "equalization of women's wages with those of men where equal service is performed," "an efficient employers' liability law," people's right to propose laws by Referendum, right to recall elected officials, "universal and equal suffrage, without regard to color, creed, or sex," and "the principle of minority representation."

The S.L.P.'s 1896 platform has these same demands, but by 1900 they were all dropped, and were no longer supported by the Party. De Leon regarded all advocacy of reforms as mere reformism. From 1896 onward the S.L.P. ceased to be an aggressive influence on American law making. This does not, however, contravene the fact that the first two decades of the first Marxist party in the United States indisputably exerted notable pressure in the direction of progressive legislation, materially assisting the parallel pressure of the Populists and organized labor, and surpassing these other influences in systematic propaganda year after year.

The Socialist Party from 1900 on continued and expanded Marxist working class pressure on law makers and administrators. The result was the growth of a body of citizens with an intellectual and critical attitude toward law and politics, armed with a scientific analysis of current social and economic problems. Both the socialist attitude and the socialist analysis were infused with sympathy and humanism in the face of poverty, unemployment, and hunger.

In 1900 the not-yet-united Socialist Party, coalescing with some difficulty while actively participating in a national election, put forward a program which clearly related its revolutionary Marxist objective to the workers' immediate needs. The founders considered it "of the utmost importance for the Socialist Party to support all active efforts of the working class to better its condition."

Then followed the immediate demands, which included the main points previously expressed in the Socialist Labor Party programs. There is no need to repeat them, except to call attention to the wording of some of them. Point Number Three asked for "state or national insurance of working people in case of accidents, lack of employment, sickness, and want in old age," thus anticipating the later provisions for Unemployment Insurance, Workmen's Compensation, Medicare, and Social Security. Another called for "the initiative and referendum, proportional representation, and the right of recall of representatives by their constituents."

One prominent example of socialist influence on legislation—or on planned legislation—is the rise of the short-lived "Bull Moose" Progressive Party led by Theodore Roosevelt. Although Roosevelt feared and hated the Socialists, he was impressed by their voter appeal, as shown by his theft in 1912 of a considerable part of the Socialist's "demands" and



their insertion in the "Bull Moose" platform.<sup>6</sup> Anyone who picks up *National Party Platforms, 1840-1956*, compiled by Kirk H. Porter and D. B. Johnson, and compares the respective 1912 programs of the Socialist and Progressive Parties, can confirm this. The Bull Moose platform says "the *old parties* have turned aside" from their proper task, thus snatching even this half-century-old socialist phrase, *the old parties*. It, too, calls for "direct primaries," "direct election of U.S. senators," "equal suffrage to men and women alike," prohibition of injunctions in labor disputes, "prohibition of child labor," "abolition of convict contract labor system," "a department of labor with a seat in the Cabinet," "a graduated inheritance tax," and "government power to levy an income tax." Some of the phrasing by this capitalist party has the appearance of hedging, such as "an eight-hour day for working women and young persons" (not for workers in general), "a system of social insurance adapted to American use," and "standards of compensation for death by industrial accident and injury and trade disease."

The effectiveness of socialist advocacy may be gauged by noting the number of these reforms that have been adopted since 1912, such as a department of labor, the income tax, social insurance, and other limited but useful provisions in the law.

Another example of a quite different kind is the Non-Partisan League and its legislation on behalf of the working farmer. The connection here is that the Non-Partisan League was the creation of members of the Socialist Party, and started as a kind of united front farmers' organization. But the officialdom of the Socialist Party was unbending in its sectarianism: "No compromise. No political trading." The Party refused to approve the League.

Andy Omholt and Otto Anstrom, life-long Socialists and long-time residents of North Dakota, both told this writer: "It was the Socialists who built the Non-Partisan League. A. C. Townley was on the North Dakota Socialist Party State Committee. There were thirty-two Socialist locals in North Dakota in 1916, and most of them went into the Non-Partisan League. The League was sparked by the Socialists. That's definite!"

If we go back three years before the Non-Partisan League was formed, and look at the program of the Socialist Party of North Dakota, we can see that the Party did indeed have its eye on the struggling farmers. Its eight demands in 1912 included state ownership and control of "grain elevators, packing houses, and cold storage plants" Also included were "state life, fire, hail, pest and animal insurance." Reduction of freight

6. Among many such comments in Socialist periodical literature, see for example, "Stealing Planks," *International Socialist Review* (November 1912), p. 399.

rates was demanded "on native coal shipments within the state." Also, "state lands [were] to be leased, not sold," and the rent charged was to be no more than the tax paid on similar land by private owners.

The League was in fact a Socialist activity in 1915 and 1916, until John Spargo (who himself later became a Republican) reported its activities unfavorably to the National Committee. Spargo said the League had succeeded in several Western states because of "the activity and organizing genius of a farmer named Townley, a Socialist, for many years active in the Socialist Party and a member at the time of forming the League, I believe." Spargo concluded that the League's "course of action is quite incompatible with . . . the organic law of the Socialist Party."

Most of Townley's army of League organizers were also Socialists; as Robert L. Morlan's *Political Prairie Fire* says, "[they were] members of the Socialist Party, and they did not abandon their beliefs."

It is interesting to note that, while A. C. Townley, a Socialist, was the League's organizer, Dr. Walter Thomas Mills, an old Socialist lecturer, was its philosopher. In *Document 101*, published by the League after it broke with the Socialist Party, Mills wrote that the League aimed "to build a fighting machine with which successfully to oppose and to destroy the autocratic political machinery of the private monopolists."

The Non-Partisan League fell short of Mills's hopes, but it did succeed in bringing about legislation beneficial to dirt farmers: "state credit facilities, state insurance systems, public ownership of certain means of distribution, and the like" (Morlan). Its achievements are a part of socialist-influenced legislation.

One may begin a study of the effectiveness of socialist influence on legislation with a citation from the Party's own estimate of its accomplishment. The Socialist *Congressional Handbook* of 1914, just two years after the big Debs vote of 1912, gives a fairly objective summary of legislative successes and limitations. This *Handbook* was prepared by Carl D. Thompson, director of the Party's Information Department, and his special assistant, Ralph Korngold, who later became a well-known biographer.

Under the heading, "What Socialists Have Done," the *Handbook* states:

The Socialists in the state legislatures of this country have accomplished three things: *First*: They have actually succeeded in putting into the statute books of the various states some 141 different laws. *Second*: They have been indirectly instrumental and [have] assisted in putting on many more. *Third*: They have prepared with great care and completeness the definite, concrete legislative measures that make up the [short-range] Socialist program.

Thus the specific measures by which the principles of Socialism may be applied have been reduced to the cold letter of the law and deposited in the official records of a dozen different states, and, we may add, in the Congress of the United States as well.

These 141 legislative enactments in one or another state are classified under several heads: (1) *labor* measures, such as requiring blower on emery wheels used in metal polishing, keeping factory doors unlocked during working hours, ordering safety appliances on corn shredders, requiring the keeping of records of injuries to employees, forbidding the use of injunctions in labor disputes; (2) *political* measures, such as making election day a half-holiday, and providing for recall of elected officials in municipalities; (3) *municipal* measures, such as giving cities the right to build ice plants and erect comfort stations, and providing for abatement of smoke nuisance; (4) *educational* measures, including a minimum wage for teachers, school lunches for children, and free night schools; and (5) *miscellaneous* measures, such as a mothers' pension law and various resolutions or petitions to Congress.

The latter item merits some emphasis, even though actual enactment of laws did not result: (a) for example, the Kansas Legislature adopted a Socialist-sponsored memorial to Congress petitioning for old age pensions, and the Wisconsin Legislature asked Congress for an investigation of the possibility of old age pensions; (b) the Wisconsin legislature in a joint action petitioned Congress to permit loans to farmers from funds in postal savings deposits; and (c) the Illinois State Assembly adopted a resolution "expressing sympathy for the Belgian suffrage strike" (that is, a strike of Belgian workers for the simple right to vote).

Concerning socialist legislation in the Congress, the *Handbook* tells of Victor Berger's lone battle against the opposition of 391 fellow congressmen and all 96 senators. Despite obstacles, Berger proposed, unsuccessfully, an eight-hour day for all government employed labor, a general old age pension, the right for postal employees to organize in a union, a bill to protect women workers in the District of Columbia, a resolution to investigate the McNamara case, another resolution to investigate the strike on the Harriman railroad lines, a bill to lend federal money to city governments to provide work for the unemployed at union rates, and a resolution asking the President to withdraw troops from the Mexican border. (This was April 5, 1911; at the time "President Taft massed troops on the frontier and seemed to be preparing to go to the rescue of Diaz," against whom the Mexican people were rebelling.)<sup>7</sup>

In a resolution calling for investigation of the Lawrence, Massachu-

7. *The American Labor Year Book, 1917-18*, p. 299.

setts, textile strike, Berger exploded a widely circulated Republican myth. "The American Woolen Company," he said, "has for years been the recipient of a government subsidy in the form of a high tariff. The claim has been made that this high tariff is levied in order to protect labor. Yet in spite of this claim it is generally conceded that these operatives [i.e., the workers on strike] are among the lowest paid of those of any industry in America."

In 1901, A. M. Simons, editor of the *International Socialist Review*, published a little pamphlet, *What the Socialists Would Do If They Won in This Election*. Dealing with the City of Chicago, in order to base his discourse on a concrete situation, he started out by explaining that many "interrelated and mutually correlated changes" would be going on at the same time, but he would begin with the schools. "Every child of school age in the city would be registered, and the record of the school attendance of every child on that register would constitute a proof of the absence of child labor."

But this was just a start. Socialists would not attempt "to stuff the brain that was carried above a shivering, half-clad body and hungry stomach." There would have to be school lunches, and clothing for all children. And still more: The health of the parents was necessary, and there would have to be inspection of food sold, and of working conditions. And not just this, but the parents had to have jobs. Among various other changes, certain structures would be moved or cleared away, so that the lake front could be used by the people for summer bathing. Simons concludes:

"Where will all the money come from with which to do these things?" some little shop-keeping bourgeois is asking. Well, where did all the wealth that is now in the world come from? Did not the laborers create it, and is there anything to make one believe that they forget how to create more?

Simons spoke officially for the young Socialist Party. An outstanding individual Socialist, Florence Kelley, devoted her long life in large part on behalf of children. Her record goes back before our century, with an article, "Our Toiling Children," published in 1889, and another, "The Working Child," published in 1896.<sup>8</sup>

"There are two ways of dealing with the problem of the working child," Miss Kelley began, in the second publication referred to:

8. *The Working Child* is in the New York Public Library, and, interestingly, is stamped, "Gift of F. A. Sorge." Sorge was general secretary of the First International in New York.



One is to prohibit outright the employment of children under 16 years of age . . . the other is the method adopted by all manufacturing countries, including our own, and consists in legislating to keep in the market an abundant supply of child labor while restricting to some extent some of the most flagrant abuses which accompany it.

In another paper, published in 1903, Miss Kelley discussed "An Effective Child-Labor Law." She began by saying the topic assigned her was "An *ideal* Child-Labor Law"—but declared there could be no such thing: only "a sweeping prohibition of all labor for all children."

In view of the great progressive influence exerted by the National Child-Labor Committee, take note of its personnel. In 1906, for example, Florence Kelley was, as always, on the Board of Trustees. In that year Scott Nearing, a Socialist, was secretary of the Pennsylvania Child Labor Committee, and J. G. Phelps Stokes (a Socialist, and husband of Rose Pastor Stokes) was on the New York Child Labor Committee. In 1908 Robert Hunter, a Socialist, was on the National Child-Labor Committee.

All the time the Socialist Party, like the Socialist Labor Party before it, was agitating against child labor and for more and better schools. A Socialist campaign leaflet in 1904 carried the slogan, "Vote for more schools! Up with the Arm and Torch!" It cited statistics showing that in 1901 there were 58,000 New York children in part-time classes, while in 1904 things were worse: there were more than 70,000 children in part-time classes.

In 1912, the Socialist New York *Call*, as was its custom, publicized the report of Owen Lovejoy, general secretary of the National Child Labor Committee. This report enumerated the states where improved child labor laws had been enacted, and implied some praise for them. But Louisiana, the report said, was "moving backward": it had just rejected a child labor bill.

The point of this is that the progress made against child labor—such as it was and is—has been due in considerable measure to the work of individual Socialists and of the Socialist Party.

One must admit that when a political movement of labor which aims to abolish capitalism tries to make laws *about* labor *under* capitalism—it is attempting something difficult. Some would regard it as also inconsistent; Marxists regard it as necessary.

A step-by-step look at some of the measures actually won should be useful.

From 1899 to 1903, the first Socialist law makers, James F. Carey and F. O. MacGartney, had minor successes in the Massachusetts legislature. One of their bills "shortened the hours of state and county employees,"

according to Ethelwyn Mills's summary of Socialist legislation.<sup>9</sup> A second shifted the burden of proof from the employee to the railroad company in suits to recover damages for injury or death.

From 1905 to 1911, out of a dozen elected Socialist legislators in Wisconsin, there were Fred Brockhausen, secretary of the State Federation of Labor, and Frank Weber, its general organizer, along with Carl D. Thompson, head of the Socialist Party's information department. This group fought through into law fifteen bills (out of 72 introduced). They included:

1. A bill providing for the erection of guards and railings over dangerous machinery in factories.
2. A bill providing that metal polishing machines be equipped with blowers and enough draft to remove metallic dust.
3. A bill requiring railway companies to equip trains with enough men to handle the work without overburdening the train men ("the Full Crew Bill").
4. An eight-hour telegraphers' law.

In 1913 there were four Socialists in the Illinois Legislature, including the lawyer, Seymour Stedman, and the founder of the Chicago Workers' School of Government, Christian M. Madsen. The Illinois Socialists privately took credit, by the way, for an important but not always observed part of law making: the defeat of obnoxious bills backed by special interests, simply because even non-Socialist legislators did not care to "go on record in favor of measures that [were] too brazen." As for direct positive action, they got a bill through—but not their own—providing for "semi-monthly payment of wages," to help hard-pressed workers whose corporation employers held back their money for a whole month. Representatives of railroad companies lobbied against the Socialist proposal and defeated it. But a similar bill introduced by an old Party man won majority backing and was passed.

In another instance the Illinois Socialists brought about the *union label* on all state printing—by a kind of trick. Their bill to do this failed of passage, but when their stationery was delivered, the four Socialist representatives refused to accept it, explaining that they could not correspond with constituents on nonunion paper. The printers then put the union label on all their work, to save themselves trouble, and no member of the legislative body, old Party or not, dared protest against it!

9. Published by the Socialist Party, 1914, as *Bulletin No. 1* of the Information Department.

In 1911 the Socialist and trade unionist, James H. Maurer, introduced into the Pennsylvania Legislature a bill "to repeal the law creating the army of mounted policemen which the capitalists call the State Constabulary." It did not pass, but it called attention to the repression practiced against striking coal miners. The Congressional Commission on Industrial Relations held hearings in this period, at which representatives of the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. testified, revealing that in such communities as Paterson, New Jersey, Los Angeles, California, Lead, South Dakota, and Ludlow, Colorado, "the right of collective bargaining on the part of employees [was] denied" (Ethelwyn Mills). The gradual recognition of this right later on can be credited in some degree to the persistent protests of Socialist legislators.

Workmen's Compensation was referred to earlier as a Massachusetts partial victory. W. J. Ghent, Socialist theoretician, said in a leaflet published in 1912, "the most advanced measure so far projected" for Workmen's Compensation had been prepared by the Joint Conference of the Central Labor Bodies and the Socialist Party of New York, and brought before Governor Charles Evans Hughes's State Commission in 1910—even though there were no Socialists then in the State Legislature. It was passed in a modified form, as Gompers boasted, with A.F.L. backing, but only, Hillquit explained, "after the New York State A.F.L. had received a good deal of valuable instruction on the subject from the Socialists."<sup>10</sup>

In Kansas, in 1913, Socialists won passage of a law requiring that bath houses be provided for miners.

In 1916 William Coleman, a Socialist alderman-at-large in Milwaukee, introduced a resolution which—we are told in *American Labor Who's Who*—"resulted in the present system of state employment offices."

One can agree that such legislation is far from socialism, but one can also say that labor would not surrender a single item.

"Minot [North Dakota] . . . is the town on the Great Northern road, where, fourteen years ago, Jim Hill fired the station agent because he was a subscriber to the *Appeal to Reason*." So wrote Ida Crouch-Hazlett in Minot's socialist paper, *The Iconoclast*, in May 1912.

The station agent's firing is just one example in just one locality of the obstacles met by Socialists in the United States. The Socialists fought back by exposing the facts and insisting on the Bill of Rights: freedom of thought, of speech, of the press, of assembly.

In Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in January 1906, City officials devised an

10. *The Double Edge of Labor's Sword* (New York: Socialist Literature Co., 1914). (Pamphlet.)

anti-red flag regulation to harass Socialist parades, which at that time used the international symbol as a matter of course. In Philadelphia and Denver free speech fights were carried on simultaneously in September of the same year. *The Worker* reported thirteen Socialists arrested in Philadelphia, including Ella Reeve Bloor and Joseph O'Brien, "in the area of the Baldwin Locomotive Works . . . for obstructing highway." In Denver, Socialist soapboxers campaigning for William D. Haywood for governor were dragged off in the patrol wagon as fast as they got up to speak. A little later Horace Traubel, editor of *The Conservator*, wrote: "I Know Just How You Feel About It, Dear Comrade," and urged the Socialists to keep on going. In Boston, the local Socialists met in historic Faneuil Hall to pay tribute to the "Great Agitator," Wendell Phillips.

In 1909 Fred D. Warren of the *Appeal to Reason* was convicted of offering a kidnap bribe through the mails. George H. Shoaf, labor journalist, told the story in the *Appeal*. The legendary Clarence Darrow was Warren's attorney. Debs charged the trial was an attack on the liberty of the press. Upton Sinclair said the outrageous verdict had "set my blood to boiling." Warren's speech in his own defense in the Fort Scott, Kansas, courtroom was, Shoaf said, an "Indictment of Capitalism and Its Despotic Institutions." In this speech Warren exposed the actual kidnapping of Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone of the Western Federation of Miners at the instigation of the mine owners' association in Colorado and Idaho.<sup>11</sup>

The New York *Call*, in 1910, reported the free speech fight in Spokane, Washington, in which Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and others were arrested "for speaking in the streets." When the Spokane Women's Club heard Miss Flynn afterward describe the conditions in the City jail, they took a hand in civic affairs: they insisted that matrons be employed there, to supervise arrested women. In New York, Mary Dreier, head of the Women's Trade Union League, was arrested for picketing the Triangle Waist Company. At a Socialist women's meeting in Carnegie Hall, chaired by Anita Block, women's editor of the New York *Call*, a resolution was unanimously adopted protesting police interference with free speech.

In 1912 the long free speech fight in San Diego, California, was reported by Vincent St. John, a leader of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), in the *International Socialist Review*. At the time he wrote, 210 men and women were still jailed for the crime of speech. A defense organization, including the I.W.W., the Socialist Party, Single Taxers, and the trade unions, was formed to defend the soapboxers.

11. For the case of William D. Haywood, Charles H. Moyer, and George Pettibone, see Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York: Cameron and Kahn, 1955), pp. 166 ff.



The New York *Call*, September 29, 1912, said of a local struggle what could have been said of many others: "The battle for the sustenance of the constitutional right of free speech is on between the Socialists of Kings County and the local authorities. The battle . . . will be to decide the important question as to whether or not a judge has the right to forbid the speakers of the Socialist Party from exercising their constitutional right of speaking on the street."

In Manhattan this same year occurred another type of free speech fight. A meeting was advertised to take place in early October in a public school near First Avenue and East 4th Street, similar to others held in various school auditoriums. The speakers were to be S. John Block, Socialist candidate for the State Supreme Court, and Marie B. MacDonald, Socialist candidate for Congress. At the last moment the Board of Education closed the school doors and prevented the meeting from going forward. After an exchange of letters, the authorities offered a second date for the circumvented meeting, and the Socialists accepted this offer—October 31, just a few days before the elections.

The strike at Little Falls, New York, in late 1912, contains within its history the characteristics of a struggle for basic constitutional rights, and illustrates the role of the Socialists in winning, or hoping at a later time to win, what the Constitution guarantees.

Some 1,500 workers—Polish, Austrian, Slavic, Italian (mostly women)—were on strike against the Phoenix and Gilbert Knitting Mills, with Benjamin J. Legere, a Socialist, as chairman of the strike committee. Police Chief James ("Dusty") Long was out to break the strike, and he jailed not only Legere and leading strikers but also Socialist Mayor George Lunn and his wife of nearby Schenectady, the Rev. Robert A. Bakeman, Miss Helen Schloss, Socialist tenement investigator from New York, Miss Jessie Ashley, Socialist attorney, and others—for street speaking or picketing. Chief Long closed down the strike relief kitchen. He drew up typed instructions to guide the testimony of the police witnesses at the resulting trial—which the defense got hold of and promptly published. Helen Keller sent a check for help to "the brave girls who are striving so courageously to bring about the emancipation of the workers at Little Falls."

In some cases of this kind officials backed down, as in 1916, at Troy, New York, where the Mayor withdrew the order forbidding Socialists to speak at street corners. Many strikes were lost, as at Little Falls, with the free speech cases to be fought out afterward in court. Sometimes, repeal of repressive legislation was secured.

Principles were asserted and fought for which had their impact on

court interpretations in later years, and helped to establish more firmly (at least in our traditions, if not in practice) the freedoms embodied in the Bill of Rights.

Many old Socialist proposals, which once were considered "subversive," are now—as Lillian Symes remarks in *Rebel America*—regarded as "intrinsically American."

As far back as 1897, for instance, Debs' Social Democracy had planks in its platform which now seem matter-of-course. One was "the establishment of postal savings banks"—but bankers in those days took a dim view of them. Another was public works to employ the unemployed—a device which many think Franklin D. Roosevelt invented.

In 1898 the Social Democracy became the Social Democratic Party, and its new program included the idea, "Labor legislation to be made *national*, instead of *local*"—and today the antiunion state "Right-to-Work" laws are opposed not only by organized labor but by many politicians.

In 1903 the Socialist Party's representative in the Massachusetts Legislature, Frederic O. MacCartney, introduced a bill to enable cities and towns to establish municipal coal and wood yards, so as to ease the price to needy working families—but the State Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional.

In 1911 the Socialists in the Wisconsin Legislature secured home rule for the City of Milwaukee, enabling it to engage in activities forbidden to Massachusetts towns—"the right to secure land and property with which to begin the building of workingmen's homes." This was followed by other measures affecting public utilities: "legalizing bonds . . . for an electric lighting plant and declaring invalid certain injunctions brought against the city to restrain it from erecting the plant"; and "authorizing cities operating heating plants to install and operate pipes and mains in the same way as for water works."

Incidentally, it was the Socialists of Wisconsin who demanded and won a half-holiday on election days, a measure which today seems but ordinary "good business."

Still another point about Milwaukee: The City Administration was just as corrupt in 1911, says Oscar Ameringer in *If You Don't Weaken*, as any city described by Lincoln Steffens in *The Shame of the Cities*. "Gold coast and red-light district, gangster and blackmailer, pickpocket and parson, during the campaign all of them were united in the holy crusade against the 'godless Socialists.'" Under the Socialist administration corruption was dealt heavy blows—but capitalism, to be sure, remained.

In 1912 James H. Maurer, Socialist trade unionist in the Pennsylvania

Legislature, led a desperate protest against the treatment of the aged poor in almshouses, and nationally the Socialists were working for an Old Age Pension. In a folder written by W. J. Ghent and issued by the Socialist Party, we read this: "It would seem—would it not?—that if we can pay pensions to men who, as soldiers, have destroyed lives, we might also pay pensions to men who, as toilers, have protected and sustained lives." Said Victor L. Berger, offering an old age pension bill in Congress: "Society owes a debt to its aged workers."

About the same time, in Williams County, North Dakota, a Socialist farmer named D. I. Todd was protesting the cruel tactics used against the wheat farmers. Todd wrote in *The Iconoclast* (October 11, 1912, p. 4):

There are on file in each of the elevators in this county the names of hundreds of honest, upright farmers who through stress of poverty have given crop mortgages or liens upon their crops. In practically all cases these lists of names are posted where the public has access to them and in most cases the amount of the indebtedness is shown, as well as their address. In one elevator we counted over 930 such mortgages and liens, running as high as \$4,000 in some cases. In another case was a list of a corporation in Minneapolis who posted 25 mortgages ranging from \$10 to \$875. The aim is to show that it has a plaster on these men's crops and warning the public that if these men present any grain for sale, the money must be withheld and turned over to this foreign corporation.

At this time Todd was a candidate on the Socialist ticket for Public Administrator of Williams County.

In 1914, as I learn from this same D. I. Todd, the little Socialist local in Hebron Township, Williams County, got up a draft of a bill providing for hail insurance, and sent it to the State Convention of the Socialist Party meeting in Minot. It was a call for a law "whereby the State would insure crops against hail loss for all farmers who signed agreements to pay their pro-rata share of losses during the growing season, such share to be added to their next taxes." And to the astonishment of everybody the legislature passed the bill, "the first such law in the U.S.A., but most states (in the West) have one now."<sup>12</sup>

In any discussion of the effect of Marxism upon American law making, the question is bound to come up: If beneficial legislation can be brought about gradually under capitalism, through normal causes which include pressures from the Socialist movement, why work particularly for socialism?

12. Letter to me from D. I. Todd, May 11, 1960.

The answer is twofold: First, reforms under capitalism, whatever their nature, seem never to be complete, and in fact must always be limited by capitalism's need for profit. Second, human striving for freedom cannot for long tolerate the private ownership of those things that control the lives of all. The ultimate goal is always greater than any or all immediate triumphs.



## V

## Marxism and the Negro People's Freedom Struggle

Back in 1912 the Negro Socialist, Hubert H. Harrison, taking issue with Rudyard Kipling, wrote in the *International Socialist Review* about "The Black Man's Burden." It is the black man, he argued, who bears the worst burden of toil and deprivation, of exploitation and oppression.

"Now," he wrote, "the essence of citizenship is the exercise of political rights"—but in sixteen southern states millions of Negroes are denied such rights. The economic position of Negroes he called "this second slavery." He gave facts and figures on the virtual denial of education to Negro children. "When a group has been reduced to serfdom, political and economic," he declared, "its social status becomes fixed by the fact."

Later that year, writing in the same magazine on "Socialism and the Negro," Harrison said: "... the mission of the Socialist Party is to free the working class from exploitation, and since the Negro is the most ruthlessly exploited working class group in America, the duty of the party to champion his cause is as clear as day." But, he added, in a rebuke that should have gotten more attention at the time, "no particular effort" had been made to do so.

The respect that Harrison deserved is evident in the words of J.A. Rogers from his book, *World's Great Men of Color*:

Harrison... was not only perhaps the foremost Aframerican intellect of his time, but one of America's greatest minds. No one worked more seriously and indefatigably to enlighten his fellow-men; none of the Aframerican leaders of his time had a saner and more effective program—but others, unquestionably his inferiors, received the recognition that was his due. Even today but a very small proportion of the Negro intelligentsia has ever heard of him.

Harrison was for many years a lecturer, soap-boxer, writer, and organizer for the Socialist party. "With Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Bill Haywood, Morris Hillquit, and other party leaders," Rogers says, "he labored for the emancipation of the workingman." His passionate devotion to both socialism and the advancement of his people was supported by one teaching of Karl Marx: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." Marx said this in the days before the Civil War. During that conflict he and Frederick Engels exerted every effort to get the Lincoln administration to issue an early Emancipation Proclamation, thus making slavery in name the central issue of the war, as it already was in fact. They made every effort, also (and not without effect), to prevent the British Government from siding with the Confederacy. Through the agency of the International, from the time it was organized in 1864, they sought to educate the American working class about the evil and the dangers of slavery. As the Civil War ended, they urged full citizenship rights to the freed Negro people: "Remove every shackle from freedom's limbs," their message warned; "Let your citizens... be free and equal, without reserve."<sup>1</sup>

This attitude was carried forward by the members of the First International who resided in the United States. When the New York Communist Club joined with German trade unionists in 1868 to form the short-lived Social Party of New York and Vicinity, one of its planks, says James S. Allen in *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy*, "demanded the repeal of all discriminatory laws"; another "favored the eligibility of all citizens... for office."

On September 13, 1871, a contingent of Negro workers took part in the great mass demonstration for the eight-hour day in New York, marching with the First International sections behind the red flag, and was greeted with applause.

There was a section of the First International also in Washington, D.C. (as in St. Louis, Chicago, and other cities), and it is interesting to note that Richard J. Hinton, "who had taken part in John Brown's uprising at Harper's Ferry, was among the most active members" of the Washington group, according to Allen.

Marxist influence reached the National Colored Labor Union headed by Isaac Myers; this union chose a member, the Reverend Sella Martin, to represent it at a Congress of the International—the same Sella Martin who

1. In his letters to Abraham Lincoln, Karl Marx spoke of the Civil War as "the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world" in *The Civil War in the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), p. 281.

in 1870 was editor of *The New Era*, of which Frederick Douglass was corresponding editor. Frederick Douglass himself succeeded Myers in 1870 as president of the National Colored Labor Union. One of the delegates present with Douglass at the Union convention was Peter H. Clark, of the Colored Teacher's Cooperative Association of Cincinnati, Ohio, who later was a leader in the Socialist Labor party. At a meeting of the Union called by Frederick Douglass in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1871, a newspaperman quoted by Charles H. Wesley (*Negro Labor in the United States*), "wanted to know if this Union was another name for Communism, or if it was a colored offshoot of the International."

There is no definite proof that Douglass, one of the two greatest Aframericans (with W. E. B. Du Bois) in United States history, was favorably interested in Marxism, or directly influenced by it; but there is circumstantial evidence. He lived during the period that the First International was active in New York, and during the most productive years of the Socialist Labor Party. In England he met leading Chartists and liked their ideas. He was clearly acquainted with equalitarian philosophy, and open-minded toward all progressive reform movements.<sup>2</sup> Douglass was a long-time friend of Wendell Phillips, Christian Socialist, who is said to have joined the First International.

It has been said that Douglass—whether Marxist or not—was *dialectical* in his thinking. An example of this is his change in attitude toward the United States Constitution: William Lloyd Garrison thought it a covenant with Hell, but Douglass came to regard it as basically antislavery and libertarian, as have the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party through the years.<sup>3</sup> Another example is his transfer of activity from the Radical Abolitionists to the Republican party, where the mass of the antislavery people were, using arguments and explanations similar to those of Marx's friend, Joseph Weydemeyer, who also supported the Republicans and Lincoln.

One wonders, to be sure, at this point, whether Douglass was even aware of the existence of Joseph Weydemeyer, who fought militarily and politically against slavery, and died a year after the Civil War ended. Did he know of Weydemeyer's friend, Hermann Meyer, a Marxist who before the Civil War had been an Abolitionist in Montgomery, Alabama? Did he know of still another contemporary, Dr. Adolph Douai, who edited an anti-slavery paper in San Antonio, Texas, before the Civil War, and

2. Philip S. Foner calls Douglass "the universal reformer" in *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (New York: International Publishers, 1950-55), Vol. II, p. 13.

3. See speech by Frederick Douglass, July 6, 1863, in Philadelphia: "Abolish slavery tomorrow, and not a sentence or syllable of the Constitution need be altered."

became a Socialist Labor Party editor and leader in New York in the 1880's? It is hard to believe that so alert a man as Douglass would not know something about these men and their ideas, but there is no precise evidence that he did.

Douglass said on one occasion that "the American people must stand *each for all and all for each*, without respect to color or race." In another place he said, with the eight-hour day in mind: "Our sympathies, as far as the *elimination of work* is concerned, are naturally enlisted on the side of the laborers." In still another place he stated that the "poor laboring white man" was "almost as much a slave as the black slave himself," explaining in this way: "The white slave had taken from him by indirection what the black slave had taken from him directly and without ceremony. Both were plundered and by the same plunderers."<sup>4</sup> These ideas might have been derived from the Socialist Labor party platform of 1879. Thus the historical tie-up of the current of Marxism with the Negro people's struggle is strongly suggested, straight through from John Brown to Frederick Douglass, from the Abolitionists to the Socialist Labor Party.

How did it happen that the Marxist support to the Negroes' struggle became diluted and perfunctory in Hubert Harrison's day? To what extent, nonetheless, did Marxism help that struggle in the days from the 1870's to 1917?

The 1879 platform of the Socialist Labor party declared for political equality "without regard to creed, race or sex," and appealed to working people of the South, "regardless of color," to unite with their brothers of the North against the southern landlords and the northern capitalists.

Philip Van Patten, Socialist Labor Party general secretary, told the convention that adopted this platform that in Cincinnati, Ohio, "Peter H. Clark, a colored man," had been a candidate of the Party for Congress the preceding autumn, along with Solomon Ruthenberg of the same state. The very first Socialist congressional nominations were thus one Negro and one white.

Incidentally, this Negro Socialist, Peter H. Clark, a co-worker of Frederick Douglass, had been a prominent leader of the working class in St. Louis during the great railroad strike of 1877. This is what he told the striking workers:

Let us finally not forget that we are American citizens: that the right of free speech and a free press is enjoyed by us. We are exercising today the right to assemble and complain of grievances.

4. Philip S. Foner (ed.), *Frederick Douglass: Selections from His Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1945).



The courts of the land are open to us, and we hold in our hands the all-compelling ballot. There is no need for violent counsels or violent deeds. If we are patient and wise, the future is ours.<sup>5</sup>

Another outstanding Negro leader within the Socialist Labor party was Frank J. Ferrell, a machinist. Philip S. Foner, in his *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, describes him as "the most famous Negro in the Knights of Labor." Ferrell represented New York's District 49 at the Knights of Labor convention at Richmond, Virginia, in 1886. Here, supported by his fellow unionists, he was the center of successful, if temporary, efforts to oppose segregation in that city.

There were also Negroes outside of the Socialist Labor party who were influenced by Marxist ideas, as shown in Dr. Herbert Aptheker's *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. He cites Thomas Fortune's *Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South*, published in 1884. "Let us see if the cause of the laboring man is not the same in all sections . . . as it is in all the world. If . . . I can incontestably demonstrate that the condition of the black and white laborer is the same, and that consequently their cause is common; that they should unite under the one banner and work upon the same platform of principles for . . . the more equal distribution of the products of labor and capital, I shall not have written this book in vain . . ."

We can include the Reverend Reverdy C. Ransom among the nonparty Socialists. "As early as 1896," according to August Meier's dissertation, *Negro Racial Thought in the Age of Booker T. Washington*, "Reverdy Ransom favored Socialism in an article in the A.M.E. Church Review." Ransom's article was entitled "The Negro and Socialism," and appeared in October, 1896. He predicted, says Meier, that when the Negro "comes to realize that Socialism offers him freedom of opportunity to cooperate with all men upon terms of equality in every avenue of life, he will not be slow to accept his social emancipation."

Somewhere along the line, unfortunately, under the leadership of Daniel De Leon, the Socialists became doctrinaire. "De Leon would invariably remind his listeners," says Arnold Petersen, Socialist Labor party national secretary, in *Daniel De Leon: Social Architect*, "that there was no such thing as a race or 'Negro question' . . . that there was only a social, a labor question, and no racial or religious question so far as the Socialist and labor movements were concerned."

This denial of reality does not mean that De Leon did not give some sympathetic thought to the condition of Negroes. Indeed, in his *Flash-*

5. Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1959), p. 231.

*lights of the Amsterdam Congress* (1906), De Leon quotes (questionably) Frederick Douglass as saying that "the present condition of the Negro is tangibly worse than when he was a chattel slave." But De Leon uses this alleged quote from Douglass as the text for a sermon on capitalism as the shadow of death through which the workers must pass to socialism. De Leon's argument was that even though wage slavery was (supposedly) worse than chattel slavery, it was a progressive step forward. "It is progress," he said, "because the present condition, the wage slave status, is the necessary precursor and key with which to open the gates of the Socialist Republic."

As theory, this is only half correct. If De Leon had followed Marx a little further and had taught that lynching, denial of civil rights, and job discrimination against Negroes were things that workers in the white skin must fight against *en route to the Socialist Republic*, he would have been a true Marxist. But this would have required him to admit that there was after all a "Negro question." It would have required the Socialist Labor party to take a militant stand against the special oppression—political, economical, and social—that Negroes suffered.

While at the Amsterdam Congress, De Leon indignantly and properly opposed a proposition by Van Koll of Holland to restrict the immigration of "inferior" races. "Socialism knows not," De Leon wrote in scorn, "such insulting, iniquitous distinctions as 'inferior' and 'superior' races among the proletariat. It is for capitalism to fan the fires of such sentiments in its scheme to keep the proletariat divided."

De Leon was a thousand times right in this statement. But if capitalism has already divided the proletariat, what must the Marxist vanguard do? It is not enough to say *there is no Negro question*, meaning that workers do not draw the color line, when the color line already exists, drawn by others. Back in 1869 Isaac Myers, of the National Colored Union, said that Negro workers were eager for unity with white workers, but "the doors of workshops in North, East, and West were bolted against them."

Here, clearly, De Leon was trapped by his own doctrinairism. Though correctly denying the assertion that Negroes were inferior, he allowed himself to forget that white workers have a duty and a necessity to fight here and now for equal rights for their black brothers.

Born as it was at the turn of the century, the new Socialist party (which rebelled against De Leon) seemed destined to make a new start toward a genuine Marxist position on the Negro question. The Indianapolis founding convention (1901) adopted a resolution that acknowledged that Negroes, "because of their long training in slavery and but recent emancipation therefrom, occupy a peculiar position in the working class." In this situation, the capitalist class sought "to foster and increase

color prejudice and race hatred between the white worker and the black." The Negro was betrayed by the old parties and even by religious and educational institutions "in his present helpless struggle against disfranchisement and violence."

"Therefore," the resolution stated, "we, the American Socialist Party, invite the Negro to membership and fellowship with us in the world movement for economic emancipation by which equal liberty and opportunity shall be secured to every man, and fraternity become the order of the world."

This resolution had a certain warmth that was lacking in the bare propagandistic call for membership "without distinction of color, race, sex or creed." Yet it, too, lacked something. Aside from the longstanding invitation to Negroes to join the Socialist movement, it stressed only sympathy with them in their oppression, not a pledge to fight against that oppression.

The warmth and meaning in the resolution were due almost solely to the insistence of the three Negro delegates at the 1901 convention: William E. Costley, a minister from San Francisco, and two coal miners, John W. Adams of Brazil, Indiana, and Edward D. McKay of Richmond, Indiana. According to the contemporary press, the original routine document submitted by the resolutions committee on the Negro question "was not satisfactory to these delegates," that is, to the three Negroes. Finally a special committee was set up that "with the assistance of the colored delegates" drafted the statement that has come down to us.

When Costley submitted his substitute for the first inadequate formulation, it contained a clause on lynching to which A. M. Simons, Socialist editor and historian, "took exception," while "Adams and Costley warmly defended it." Max Hayes, of the Printers Union, and the Reverend George H. Herron declared to their eternal credit that the Party "must not fail to meet the moral issue." But when the final wording was adopted, the clause that specifically condemned lynching did not appear.

Lacking in the resolution, therefore, was any forthright reference to either segregation or lynching. When the right of free press was involved, or free speech, the Socialists fought manfully against denial; if a working-class leader was kidnapped, as happened to William D. Haywood and his comrades in 1906, they rose to his defense. Why, then, was it thought un-Socialist to rise to the defense of the victimized Negro people? It can be explained theoretically only on the basis of De Leon's denial that there was a Negro question. De Leon was known as a "Marxist," and his narrow, doctrinaire limitation of theory—so contrary to Marx's own example as well as to his teaching—had its effect down the years on Socialist thought and action.

It even affected the thinking of Eugene Debs, a strong defender of equality of white and black workers. "Debs," says Ray Ginger in *The Bending Cross*, "always refused to speak before segregated audiences." At one time he declared, "I say that the Socialist Party would be false to its historic mission . . . if, on account of race considerations, it sought to exclude any human being from political equality and economic freedom." But he also hoped "the next convention (might) repeal the resolution on the Negro question," that is, the one adopted in 1901. Debs could say, on the one hand, "Of course the Negro will 'not be satisfied with equality with reservation. Why should he be? Would you?'" and then he would add, with no awareness of inconsistency: "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races." He was hamstrung by the old misinterpretation of economic theory.

This is chiefly why the Socialist party never reaffirmed the 1901 resolution. Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois noted this in a *New Review* article in 1913, saying wryly that the Party had succeeded in at least not repealing its single straightforward declaration. Du Bois expressed the central truth when he asked, "Can the objects of Socialism be achieved so long as the Negro is neglected?" Whether intentionally or not, he was here echoing Marx's warning about the impossibility of freeing labor in the white skin "where in the black, it is branded."

There was an additional, and in fact, decisive factor at work, besides the misrepresentation of Marxist economics—race prejudice within the Party. Besides A. M. Simons, there were two other delegates at the 1901 convention—William L. Hamilton of Indiana and F. L. Robinson of Kentucky—who objected to the clause against lynching on the ground that it would lose votes in the South! Victor L. Berger, who was later elected to Congress, publicly described Negroes as rapists, according to Ira Kipnis in *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*.

The most shameful passage in Socialist history occurred in 1902, only a year after the founding convention. The Second International, through its International Bureau, questioned the American party about its attitude toward lynching. The reply, as quoted by Kipnis, was as follows:

The Socialist Party points out the fact that nothing less than the abolition of the capitalist system and the substitution of the Socialist system can provide conditions under which the hunger maniacs, kleptomaniacs, sexual maniacs and all other offensive and now-lynchable human degenerates will cease to be begotten or produced.

Another development came in 1904 when the Socialist party of Louisiana adopted a constitution providing for segregated locals. This was



too brazen for the Socialist leadership, and the Louisiana application for a charter was turned down until the offending clause was deleted. But the resulting discussion in letters to the Socialist press showed how necessary was a campaign of instruction in Socialist humanism.

*The Seattle Socialist*, edited by Dr. Herman F. Titus, carried extensive reprints of opinion on both sides of the "segregated local" controversy. One of the antisegregation pieces was a featured letter from Turnersville, Texas, written by Edwin Arnold Brenholtz, who said, ironically, that segregated locals might increase the *numbers* in the Party, but he hoped that "each and every attempt to segregate a single human being will be promptly sat down on by the National Committee, and if not by them, then by the party at large, once and for all time." Then he added: "A local at this and every other place is greatly to be desired—but not at the cost of principle. What is now needed most of all is for every Socialist in the world to deliberately crush out of himself every vestige of race prejudice. . . . The work of the Socialist in the South in the immediate future lies not so much in making Socialist voters as in breaking down race prejudice."<sup>6</sup>

Important was the case of the Socialist attorney, Eraste Vidrine, himself a "Cajun" of New Orleans. He wrote an article for the *International Socialist Review* in January, 1905, again urging separate locals for Negroes, on the ground that comrades of the "gentler sex" would not be comfortable in a mixed local. He reported the actual existence of an all-Negro local in Litcher, Louisiana, at that time. It is only fair to add, however, that Vidrine's views on the Negro question reportedly changed considerably as time went on.

Another Southerner, Covington Hall, a Socialist poet and a friend of Eraste Vidrine, took an opposing position. He helped Vidrine to correct his chauvinistic views. Covington Hall's articles in the *International Socialist Review* emphasize equality and comradeship of all workers, regardless of color, although in somewhat general terms.

Mixed with such efforts, however, were still such supposedly "correct" articles in *The Call* as that of the Socialist journalist Robert Hunter ("The Emancipation of the Negro"), calling on the Negro to "fight his own battles and win his own victories."<sup>7</sup>

Despite the doctrinairism, the white chauvinism, and the opportunism,

6. *The Seattle Socialist*, January 17, 1904, as shown by a photocopy supplied by the University of Washington Library (Seattle) through the courtesy of Robert D. Monroc, Head, Special Collections Division. It was evidently a page of correspondence on the controversial Louisiana proposal to organize segregated schools in the Socialist party.

7. *The Call* (New York), May 31, 1901; supplied on microfilm at the Tamiment Library, New York City, through the courtesy of Mrs. Louise Heinze, Librarian.

there continued to be voices raised within the Socialist party demanding a more forthright and positive stand on the Negro question. Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and Hubert Harrison, the leading Negro Socialists, continued to thunder in their different ways. Mary White Ovington, white social worker, asked in *The Call* (New York) that the 1901 resolution be reaffirmed.

The most scholarly critique of Socialist practice in regard to Negroes was written in a series of some fifteen articles in the *International Socialist Review* (1909-1910) by Dr. I. M. Rubinow (under the pseudonym of I. M. Robbins). He took a sober Marxist position and buttressed his argument with statistics, analyses, and logic in a manner more like Marx's own than any other American Socialist theoretician.

In his conclusion he hoped, half-humorously, that his efforts had done some good, "for surely Comrade [Charles H.] Kerr would never have agreed to accept a series of fifteen articles about the foresaken Negro, for whom we have until now shown so very little concern." He ended with these words:

The Socialist Party must take a definite attitude on the Negro problem, and must not be afraid to proclaim it. And this attitude must include something a good deal more tangible than the promise of "full products of one's labor in the cooperative commonwealth." It must include, if it is to be logical and honest, a clear, unmistakable demand for the entire abolition of all legal restriction of the rights of the Negro. . . . The attitude of the Socialist movement must not only be passively correct and decent, but actively aggressive. . . . Will we be wise enough to do it?

The Socialist movement, as things turned out, did not live up to the hopes of Rubinow, and certainly not to the ideals of Marx. But something was accomplished for all that. Marxism did indeed give some help to the struggle for the Negro people for full freedom, and furthermore, it kept alive the hope and the possibility of powerful white allies in that struggle. It did rather more through the Socialist party than had been done through the Socialist Labor party.

To begin with, one of the first candidates nominated for Congress by the Socialist party was the thirty-three-year-old Negro trade unionist James L. Bishop, of the Fifth District of Indiana, in the fall of 1902. "Bishop is an enthusiastic Socialist and an active worker in his union," declared *The Recorder*, a local Negro newspaper. It added that he was president of the local Central Labor Union of Clinton, Indiana.<sup>8</sup>

8. It is a coincidence that the first Negro nominee of the Socialist Labor party, Peter H. Clark, was also a candidate for Congress.

In 1904 one of the delegates to the Second National Socialist Party Convention, held in Chicago, was the Reverend George W. Woodbey, a Negro cleric from California and a Party member for many years.

Also in 1904, in the August issue of *The Comrade* appeared significant pro-Socialist quotations from two Negro periodicals, *The Broadax* of Chicago and *The Bee* of Washington, D. C. *The Comrade*, which is authority for the citations, was a Marxist art and literature magazine in the first decade of the century. It was the precursor of *The Masses*.

*The Broadax*, "published by and for Negroes," is quoted thus:

Eugene V. Debs, who is making the race for President of the United States on the Socialist ticket, should receive the votes of two or three hundred thousand colored men, for he is one of the greatest champions of the civil and political rights of the Afro-American, and by doing so the Negro would show to the world of mankind that he is not the abject slave of either one of the great political parties.

The other publication, *The Bee*, said:

The Socialist Party believes in the equality of man. Neither the Democratic nor the Republican party believes in human rights so far as the Negro is concerned. The Republican party has admitted its inability to protect the Negro in his vote. The Democratic party whenever it obtains power disfranchises the colored man. . . . In the coming contest what position will the colored voter assume? . . . Must the Negro in the coming campaign divide his vote? . . . The time has come for the colored man to act.

Further impressive evidence of the Negro's interest in and knowledge of Marxism is given in Herbert Aptheker's *Documentary History of the Negro People*. The newer Socialist Party, organized in 1900, was largely responsible for this renewed interest, but the social push came from the Negro people themselves. When George Edwin Taylor, first Black candidate for president, gave his acceptance speech to the National Liberty Party in St. Louis in 1904, he declared that Black workers were an important part of "the vast common working classes of this great republic." He added, in denouncing disenfranchisement laws against Black men: "The Negro of the United States is distinctively a factor in the great and grand army of American workingmen, and whatever enhances, strengthens, retards or impedes his progress, happiness, manhood, or citizenship rights, proportionately affects all the citizens of his class and standing." (cited work p. 854.)

But more pointed were the remarks of Jesse Max Barber, editor of the *Voice of the Negro*, published in Atlanta, Georgia, June, 1904;

The doctrine of Socialism is the doctrine of an Industrial State, directed by modern science, with government ownership and control of all public utilities, and based upon the equality of mankind. . . . Mr. Debs has said repeatedly that the Socialist party is the Black man's hope and friend. There are objections to Socialism in some of its aspects, but it is a splendid field for negotiations for the Negro in these days when the Republican party has forsook him to the persecutions of the Democrats. An examination of the field certainly could do no harm. We must affiliate with a party that will reward our endeavors with friendly co-operation. (*Ibid.* p. 856.)

Similarly, the *Georgia Baptist* of Augusta, Georgia, was quoted in the *New York Age* of September 6, 1906, as follows:

We are of the opinion that the colored voters of Georgia will find it to their interest to vote the Socialist state ticket in October. Nine-tenths of the white people who belong to the Socialist party are laboring people; they must live daily upon the sweat of their brow. Nine-tenths of the colored people are laboring people, who must eat bread daily in the sweat of their brow. The consolidation of wealth during the past score of years must admonish all laboring classes that their hope for the future devolves largely upon their coming together, and in one common cause, fighting the battle of labor against combinations of wealth. (*Ibid.* p. 857.)

At the National Negro Conference, New York City, May 31-June 1, 1909, the remarks of George Frazier Miller, a Brooklyn cleric, indicate not only his own knowledge of Marxism but his confident assumption that his hearers also were familiar with it.

Now, there is the great Socialistic party which stands for economic independence, which is the hope of the future today. I stand for rights. There are some people who say they want certain rights and do not want others. Some people say they are not looking for social equality. I want every kind of equality I can have. By that I do not mean that I want to force myself upon any man's presence, I never sought a man socially, and I don't expect to. I don't care whether he be rich as Carnegie, holy as St. John, wise as Socrates, or white as the Albanian fathers, but what I want is equality, and if I don't get equality, then I want superiority. Under Socialism we have economic independence. Everyone has the right to work and every man the full reward of his labors." (*Ibid.* p. 922.)

Continuing our attention to that same historic Black conference—from which evolved the N.A.A.C.P.—here is an excerpt from the speech delivered there by Dr. J. Milton Waldron, a Baptist minister of Washington, D. C., whose topic was "The Problem's Solution:"



In the second place, the Negro must make common cause with the working class which today is organizing and struggling for better social and economic conditions. The old slave oligarchy maintained its ascendancy largely by fixing a gulf between the Negro slave and the free white laborer, and the jealousies and animosities of the slave period have survived to keep apart the Negro and the laboring white man. Powerful influences are at work even today to impress upon the Negro the fact that he must look to the business men of the South alone for protection and recognition of his rights, while at the same time these influences inflame the laboring white man with fears of social equality and race fusion. The Negro, being a laborer, must see that the cause of his labor is his cause, that his elevation can be largely achieved by having the sympathy, support and cooperation of that growing organization of working men the world over which is working out the larger problems of human freedom and economic opportunity. (*Ibid.* pp. 923-924.)

The ideas of Marx were clearly acceptable and inspiring to some Black intellectuals throughout post-Civil War history. Only organized socialist politics was at fault, as I have stressed elsewhere in this chapter.

Frank Crosswaith of New York was a young Black man in the Socialist movement of 1906, as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn recalls in *I Speak My Own Piece*. In 1909, the year that Hubert Harrison joined the Party, a Negro preacher in Milford, Ohio, the Reverend Richard Euell, was already a member. Writing for the *Ohio Socialist Bulletin*, he said that the Negro "belongs to the working class and must be taught class consciousness."

In 1911, when Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois became a member of the Socialist Party, he was put at once on the speakers' bureau. He left the Party a year later, as he explains in *Dusk of Dawn*, to support Woodrow Wilson for president, because the latter had assured "absolute fair dealing" to the Negro people.

Just before joining the Party, Du Bois published a news item in *The Crisis* (December, 1910) entitled "Socialists in Oklahoma." It was quoted from *The Call* and described a convention of Negro organizations in Chickasha, Oklahoma, that officially endorsed the Socialist platform and "advised all the colored people of Oklahoma to vote the Socialist Ticket." The article hailed this event as "epoch-making," and went on to say:

It is a principle universally acknowledged by Socialists that although Socialism is primarily the movement of the working class for the overthrow of capitalist rule, it nevertheless must rush to the assistance of every oppressed class or race or nationality. The working class cannot achieve its ultimate grand aim of freeing itself from

exploitation unless it frees all other elements of the community from exploitation. It cannot put an end to its own oppression unless it puts an end to all forms of oppression.

This was the genuine Marxist Socialist position. Odd that it had so little expression, even in words!

In the first five years of the second decade of the twentieth century, and especially when World War I got under way, there was a real Socialist upsurge in New York among Negro intellectuals. Outstanding among them was A. Philip Randolph, founder of *The Messenger*, which started publication under that name in early 1917 just before the Russian Revolution. (Actually, it had begun as *The Hotel Messenger*, a workers' union paper, in 1916, according to Richard B. Moore.) Associated with Randolph was Chandler Owen. Both Owen and Randolph were lecturers at the Rand School. Other contributors to *The Messenger* were W. A. Domingo, a fiery West Indian leader, and the scholarly Reverend George Frazier Miller of Brooklyn.

Still other New Yorkers were Richard B. Moore, orator and scholar, who had sat at the feet of Hubert Harrison. Moore read Morgan's *Ancient Society* in 1916, joined the Socialist party early in 1917, and left again when Algernon Lee, in a lecture to Harlem Socialists, declared that Negroes were sharecroppers, not industrial workers, and could not be organized. J.A. Rogers, the well-known Negro journalist, read a good deal of Marx, he says, around 1915 and afterward, and was especially influenced by Marx's materialist conception of history. Otto and Hermie Huiswoud were a West Indian husband and wife team of Socialist propagandists around 1912-1916.

Negro women also stepped forward, such as Helen Holman, described by those who heard her in 1916 as a brilliant and powerful public speaker; also Williana Burroughs and Grace Campbell, two talented and devoted public school teachers. A younger woman, Layle Lane, who later became a teacher, recalls belonging to a branch of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society at Howard University in 1916. Indeed, this branch sent a delegate named William Foster to the Society's 1916 national convention. The poet Claude McKay turned to socialism about this time, and was published in *The Masses*.

In Detroit there were four outstanding Socialist speakers who addressed huge crowds in Moose Temple early in 1917, only a few weeks before the first Russian Revolution, and one of them was a Negro. The list comprised Eugene V. Debs, the grand old leader; Louis B. Boudin, the lawyer and author; Charles M. O'Brien, of Canada, who had been a member of a provincial legislature there; and Ross D. Brown, of Muncie,

Indiana, described in the *Michigan Socialist* as "Colored Lecturer," "Able Exponent of Socialism," and author of a book, *The Real Cause of War*.

Another early prominent Negro Socialist was the late Benjamin Lowell Careathers, steel worker and trade-union organizer of Pittsburgh, and old-time friend of William Z. Foster. Careathers was a leader of the Socialist left wing.

The Industrial Workers of the World was another avenue through which Marxist thought reached some Negro leaders and through them the Negro people.

Most prominent of Negro wobblies was Benjamin F. Fletcher, longtime associate of William D. Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Fletcher lived in Philadelphia, was active in water-front organizational work, and was a leader among the longshoremen.

Owen Middleton, who years later was an artist and news correspondent at the United Nations, and, under the banner of Henry A. Wallace's Progressive Party, ran for legislative office in 1948, was in earlier days, as a young man, a member of the I.W.W. So was Lovett Fort-Whiteman, who later (1925) played a leading role as organizer of the American Negro Labor Congress. On the West Coast there was R. T. Sims, who came to the I.W.W. from the Socialist Party.

Newsman Cyril Briggs (died October 1966), who found the Socialist Party too dominated by its Right Wing, was favorably impressed by the non-discriminatory and militant policy of the I.W.W. before and during World War I. This can be said of other Marx-oriented radicals as well as Briggs: They demanded of their white comrades a forthright stand on the Negro question.<sup>9</sup>

While the I.W.W. practiced equality in relations of white and black workers, it tended to avoid theoretical discussion of black-white relations, or to over-simplify these relations. "Social equality" they simply laughed at, as a bourgeois theme unworthy of the attention of proletarians. To a degree, so far as theory was concerned, the I.W.W. rested its position on the old De Leon denial that a Negro question existed. (De Leon, of course, was one of the founders of the I.W.W. in 1905.) The I.W.W. solved it, one might say, by removing it from the agenda.

Socialists had a good deal to do with the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), by far the oldest civil rights organization—the organization that has stood for half a century as the backbone of Negro hopes and aspirations, and the symbol of Negro courage and culture.

9. A. P. Randolph and his co-workers on *The Messenger*, mentioned earlier, were also at first strongly influenced by the I. W. W.

In an article entitled "How the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Began," Mary White Ovington, a Socialist, tells how the idea was suggested by William English Walling, another Socialist. In a magazine article Walling denounced the race riots of a few weeks earlier that had taken the lives of Negroes in Springfield, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln's city. He firmly states: "... We must come to treat the Negro on a plane of absolute political and social equality." With indignation and hope, he asked "what large and powerful body of citizens" was ready to come to the aid of the Negro people.<sup>10</sup>

Miss Ovington wrote to Walling, and after conferring with another friend, Dr. Henry Moskowitz, they issued "a call for a national conference on the Negro question," to be held in New York on February 12, Lincoln's birthday anniversary. Among the fifty-five signers, in addition to Dr. Du Bois, were such other Socialists as Charles Edward Russell, pioneer muckraker; Florence Kelley, friend of Frederick Engels; Mary E. Drier, suffragette and former president of the National Women's Trade Union League; and J. G. Phelps Stokes, later the husband of Rose Pastor Stokes. We may include also the names of others, especially William Dean Howells, utopian Socialist and contributor to Socialist campaigns; Leonora O'Reilly, utopian Socialist and suffragette; and Helen Olivia Phelps Stokes, who joined the Socialist party in 1911, the same year that Dr. Du Bois joined; George Frazier Miller, a Black minister from Brooklyn, N.Y.

The work of Marx provided the basis for a sound and effective working-class program on the Negro question, a program that the majority of Negroes might have supported. Inadequate use of this foundation was made, however, by the Socialist Labor and Socialist parties through their doctrinaire positions of unreality about particular racial discriminations and injustices. Something was nevertheless accomplished, in two ways: first, by making Marxist thought available to Negro leaders through some of the more advanced leaders directly allied with socialism; and second, a valuable and potentially powerful means of winning full Negro freedom—that of building real Black and white labor unity—was kept alive for the time that would certainly come.

As we have seen, Du Bois was justifiably impatient<sup>11</sup> in earlier days

10. *The Independent*, September 3, 1908, as quoted from William English Walling by Mary White Ovington in a brochure, "How the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Began," published originally in 1914 by the NAACP, 20 West 40 Street, New York, N. Y. 10018.

11. Helen Alfred (ed.), *Toward a Socialist America: A Symposium of Essays by Fifteen Contemporary American Socialists* (New York: Peace Publications, 1958), pp. 179-91.



with the half-awareness of working-class socialism in this country, but his later thinking appears in these words:

The footsteps of the long oppressed and staggering masses are not always straight and sure, but their mistakes can never cause the misery and distress which the factory caused in Europe, colonial imperialism caused in Asia and Africa, and which slavery, lynching, disfranchisement, and Jim-Crow legislation have caused in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

12. Ibid., p. 186.

## VI

# Marxism and the Battle for Woman Suffrage

The struggle for the ballot was a sector in the fight for various rights that women were and are deprived of, such as equal pay for the same work, trade union privileges, freedom from a raft of legal disabilities, and opportunity for consideration in leadership and popular esteem. The ballot has been a measuring-stick for progress of women's rights in general.

Those who write the conventional story of this progress have a tendency to omit the Marxist contribution. Forgotten by them are the hundreds of devoted Socialist women who consciously strove for the ballot.

This situation was recognized by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who published "Women in American Socialist Struggles" in *Political Affairs* back in 1960.<sup>1</sup>

The situation arises in part out of the production of books and studies which are in many ways models of scholarship, but which tend to make very slight reference—or none at all—to Socialist women suffragists. An example of this is *Century of Struggle* (1959), a generally fine book by Eleanor Flexner. It was praised by Grace Hutchins of Labor Research Association as "the first full, well-rounded story of the woman's suffrage movement."<sup>2</sup>

Yet this book has only one mention of the Socialist Party in the index. It speaks of very few Socialist women, and of the few mentioned, only one or two, such as Leonora O'Reilly, are referred to as Socialists. Even Florence Kelley, translator of some of the works of Marx and Engels, and member of both the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party at

1. *Political Affairs*, April, 1960, pp. 33-39.

2. *The Worker*, Sept. 20, 1959, p. 10.

certain periods, is just a "passionate crusader" in this book.<sup>3</sup> Ellen Gates Starr, who was described in the *Christian Socialist* of April 1, 1914, as "a red card Socialist," is identified by Miss Flexner only as "of Hull House."<sup>4</sup> Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the poet, is described as "widely read," but there is no hint that she was a Socialist. The suffragette leader, Harriet Stanton Blatch, is of course highly praised, but no one would guess from this book that she ever wrote for the *New York Call*.<sup>5</sup>

This unfortunate trend among historians to bury the Marxists began years ago when the fight for the suffrage was hottest, and was recognized then, too, with surprise and dismay.

In 1910, for example, Lena Morrow Lewis, wife of Arthur Morrow Lewis, toured the country for suffrage on behalf of the Socialist Party, and was interviewed by a *New York Call* reporter.<sup>6</sup> She centered attention on the tendency of pure-and-simple suffragettes to shoulder all the glory, whenever a victory was won.

"At their recent celebration in Cooper Union over the victorious amendment in Washington state, which grants suffrage to all women," Miss Lewis said, "no credit whatever was given to the Socialist women who played such a large part in stirring up sentiment in Washington for the suffrage amendment. No mention was made of the fact that Gene Debs toured the state during the campaign, holding tremendous meetings, in which he devoted a considerable part of his every speech to the advocacy of the suffrage amendment. The fact was passed over that the Socialist party brought its machinery into action in aid of the women of Washington, and spread broadcast throughout Washington literature which called attention to the need for and the justice of the suffrage amendment. No attention was paid to the fact that the Socialist party sent a special organizer, Anna Maley, into Washington, where, in conjunction with the state organization, she worked hard for the amendment."

Victoria Woodhull was not only "a woman of beauty and wit," as Eleanor Flexner describes her,<sup>8</sup> but also in 1871-72 a leader of the Spring Street Council in New York, one of the main American divisions of the First International. She edited *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, and pub-

3. *Century of Struggle*, p. 214.

4. *Century of Struggle*, p. 244.

5. See, for example, *New York Call*, May 1, 1909, p. 7, and Feb. 28, 1915, p. 9.

6. *New York Call*, Nov. 10, 1910, p. 4.

7. John M. Work, *What's So & What Isn't*, pamphlet, C. H. Kerr & Co., Chicago, 1905.

8. *Century of Struggle*, p. 153. See also Emanie Sachs, *The Terrible Siren* (About Victoria Woodhull), 1928, and Samuel Bernstein, *The First International in America*, 1962.

lished the first English translation of the *Communist Manifesto* in the United States. She organized the Equal Rights Party, was the candidate of this party for president, which suggested Frederick Douglass as her running mate. Miss Woodhull, backed by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was the first woman in history to address a Congressional committee on the subject of votes for women.

Miss Woodhull was not a developed Marxist. Her group was later expelled from the International, not for advocating women's rights but for mixing spiritualism and bourgeois radicalism with working class thought, thus confusing and antagonizing the American public.

Miss Woodhull was not the only woman in the First International. There was a woman's section of the International in Milwaukee, as noted in Samuel Bernstein's *First International in America*.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, as the same authority shows, women's organizations in New York cooperated with the International from the very first. The great Cooper Union anti-war meeting of Nov. 19, 1870, called in opposition to the Franco-Prussian War and specifically to the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, was addressed not only by spokesmen for the International, the trade unions, and the Free Thinkers, but also by "Mrs. L. D. Blake representing the women's societies."<sup>10</sup>

The resolution on women's rights adopted by the first Marxist party in the United States (1876) stated: "We acknowledge the perfect equality of rights of both sexes, and in the Workingmen's Party of the United States this equality of rights is a principle and is strictly observed."<sup>11</sup>

The Socialistic Labor Party (1879), which succeeded the Workingmen's Party, demanded full suffrage "without regard to creed, color, or sex."<sup>12</sup> So did the Socialist Labor Party in 1892, under Daniel De Leon's earlier leadership.<sup>13</sup>

The Socialist Party of Debs said the same thing in 1900, and in 1904 explicitly pledged "equal suffrage of men and women." It was in 1910 that the Socialist Party appointed a full-time woman's organizer, Marguerite Prevey of Ohio, to coordinate socialist work with advocacy of suffrage among women.

The capitalist parties avoided the issue. The Socialists could always

9. Samuel Bernstein, *First International in America*, Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1962, pp. 265; 280.

10. *First International in America*, pp. 46-48.

11. *First International in America*, p. 287.

12. Photostatic Copy of "Platform, Constitution & Resolutions," Socialistic Labor Party, Dec. 26-31, 1879, and Jan. 1, 1880. Labadie Collection, University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

13. Kirk H. Porter and D. B. Johnson, *National Party Platforms*, University of Illinois Press, 1956, p. 96 f.



point to the fact that theirs was the only political party which stood for equal suffrage.

This programmatic reality is augmented by the more important fact that Socialist women all along voted and held office within Socialist organizations from local to national level. They lectured, organized, served in positions of leadership, and, in the regular state and national campaigns, had their names on the ballot as candidates for public office. Socialist women had the ballot within the party many, many years before the 19th Amendment was passed.

This declared support for suffrage was not a mere "standing for" something, without positive action. Walter B. Rideout, now of the University of Wisconsin, takes note of "the valuable support that the Socialist Party gave to the movement for Woman Suffrage," and there is considerable evidence for this.<sup>14</sup>

On Jan. 16, 1911, Victor Berger—the first Socialist congressman—introduced a resolution into Congress for a constitutional amendment for woman's suffrage, and backed it up with a "monster petition of 109,582 people."<sup>15</sup>

Even earlier, on Feb. 22, 1908, the *Worker*—New York Socialist paper of half-a-century ago—reported Socialist testimony by Morris Hillquit and Meta L. Stern in Albany in favor of a constitutional amendment for equal suffrage. The Socialists demanded the franchise for women as a "social right."

In Illinois it was a Socialist member of the legislature, Seymour Stedman, who gave the principal speech on behalf of the state bill for woman suffrage.<sup>16</sup>

At the hearings before the joint committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Woman Suffrage, United States Senate, April 23, 1912, testimony was given by all advocates of suffrage, and they included the Socialists, Miss Caroline A. Lowe of Kansas City and Miss Leonora O'Reilly of New York, spokesmen for working women.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, all through these years, thousands of leaflets were distributed throughout the country, like the one advertised in *The Progressive Woman*, a Socialist magazine, February, 1909: "Why the Socialist Woman Demands Universal Suffrage."

*The Christian Socialist*, a religious magazine which supported the

14. Walter B. Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1956, p. 75.

15. *Socialist Congressional Campaign Handbook*, 1914, p. 329.

16. Ethelwyn Mills, *Legislative Program of the Socialist Party, 1899-1913*. Bulletin No. 1, Information Dept. Chicago, 1914, pp. 45-46.

17. U. S. Senate, 62nd Congress, Second session, April 23, 1912.

Socialist Party program and candidates, reported, March 1, 1914, how all over the country "Women Run for Office on Socialist Ticket." In Illinois, for instance, Mrs. Mary Elliott was running for the collectorship in Edwardsville; Mrs. Grace Groetska, for school trustee of Glen Carbon; Mrs. Mary W. Busby, wife of a molder, for alderman in the Sixth Ward of Quincy; Mrs. Anna Tillquist, for assistant supervisor in that same ward; Mrs. Catherine Buss, for assistant supervisor in another township. And so on; no famous names. Just rank-and-file Socialist women showing they want the suffrage and are determined to use it for public benefit.

Among the few Socialists actually elected to office half a century ago, under local suffrage provisions, were some Socialist women. *The Progressive Woman* for January, 1910, reports, for example, that Olga Staps was elected to the schoolboard at Elmwood Place, Ohio, by 300 votes, a majority of 19. She was the only Socialist, along with five Republicans. Interviewed by the *Cincinnati Post*, she gave her 6-point program, which included small classes, the right of trial for a teacher when dismissed, "provision for the physical needs of children," and, above all, "Female teachers to be paid the same salary as male teachers for the same class of work."<sup>18</sup>

Literally hundreds of such varied examples could be given of direct Socialist work for woman suffrage.

The Socialists opposed limitations of the suffrage<sup>19</sup> as was first done in England, allowing the vote only to women of thirty or more; or, as some proposed, allowing only women *tax-payers* to vote; or limiting the vote to *white* women. For example, on Dec. 6, 1914, the *New York Call* carried an article, "Negro Women and the Suffrage," by Sarah Rush Parks, denouncing "cowardice and equivocation" on this question. "Women are *people*—Negroes are *people*—this is a government of the *people*," she wrote.

Even more important, in some ways, was Socialist cooperation with the various suffrage organizations.

On Nov. 10, 1912, when a big suffrage demonstration took place in New York, the *Call* carried the page one banner headline, "35,000 Marchers for Suffrage heartily cheered by 100,000 Persons Watching Procession." This was followed by the sub-head, "Socialist Division in Mighty Parade for Equal Rights Shows Up 6,000 Strong and Gets Enthusiastic Greeting from Spectators." And finally, as the paraders wind up in

18. *The Progressive Woman*, January, 1910, p. 2.

19. "Restricted Woman Suffrage," by Bertha Howe, *New York Call*, Nov. 30, 1910, p. 4.

Union Square, working class speakers give "Plain Exposition of Why Women Should Have the Ballot in Every State."

In its "Woman's Day" number, the *Christian Socialist* two years later described the great suffrage parade that took place the preceding November, in Washington, D. C. All carried yellow banners, the suffrage color, and so did the Socialist section. But among the Socialist marchers—"Suddenly the scene changed. The yellow was gone, and in its place was red—red sashes, red banners, red hat-bands, red dresses. . . . All was red, red, red. . . . On their banners the inscription: 'Every Socialist is a Suffragist.'"<sup>20</sup>

A most vivid illustration of working together is given in a large advertisement of a Socialist meeting in the *New York Call* on Feb. 25, 1912, to be held in the Republic Theatre. The list of speakers and subjects tells the story: Alice Stone-Blackwell, suffragette, spoke on "The Emancipation of Women"; May Wood Simons, Socialist, on "The Working Woman and Her Vote"; and Dr. George R. Lunn, Socialist mayor of Schenectady, on "The Woman in Her Politico-Economic Relation to Society." Rose Schneiderman of the Women's Trade Union League was chairman.

In the same issue of the *Call* in which this ad appeared there was a special article by the suffrage leader, Alice Stone-Blackwell, entitled "Woman's Enfranchisement and 'Big Business.'" She tells how the Boston and Maine Railroad fought against equal suffrage in New Hampshire. "North, South, East and West," she writes, "in one suffrage campaign after another, we have had a like experience. . . . We have found ourselves up against the open or secret opposition of 'Big Business.'"

One more example of this type: A leaflet announces "Labor Suffrage Mass Meeting" at Carnegie Hall, March 22, 1911, with Samuel Gompers of the A.F.L. and Mary Dreier and Helen Marot of the Women's Trade Union League as honorary vice-chairmen, and a mixed group of speakers, including the Socialist leader, Meyer London, and Socialist women, Clara Lemlich and Leonora O'Reilly.

Another type of cooperation was shown by the *New York Call* in issuing its "Special Woman Suffrage Edition," Feb. 27, 1909, and by the *Progressive Woman* in its "Special Suffrage Edition," March, 1909.

Still more pertinent is the reprinting in the *Socialist Party Handbook* of 1916 of the article, "Why We must Have an Amendment to the United States Constitution," by Mary Beard and Florence Kelley.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the *Progressive Woman*, September, 1908, reprinted Susan B. Anthony's

20. *The Christian Socialist*, March 15, 1914, p. 3.

21. *Socialist Party Handbook*, 1916, p. 56 f.

reply to Theodore Roosevelt's argument about woman suffrage giving an opening to "race suicide."

Equally significant is the fact that Harriet Stanton Blatch contributed an article to the *New York Call*, May 1, 1909, entitled "The Working Woman and the Vote."<sup>22</sup> She noted that there were then 5,000,000 working women in the United States. "Working women more than others need the vote," she wrote, "for they have not time to give to the indirect ways of getting laws passed."

A remarkable letter dated March 15, 1911, is extant at the Tamiment Library thanking Mrs. Blatch—who is addressed as "President, Women's Political Union"—for surrendering a date for a May Day parade to the Socialist Party. It appears that Mrs. Blatch had planned a suffrage parade, but at the request of William Mailly, Socialist secretary, she gave up the date.

*The Comrade*, socialist literary organ of a few years earlier, contains, "A Tribute to Elizabeth Cady Stanton" by Leonard D. Abbott, a member of the editorial staff, which among other things says the following: "In economics Mrs. Stanton was quite definitely a Socialist, and she contributed on occasion to the Socialist press. It is worth noting in this connection that her daughter, Mrs. Blatch, acted for some time on the executive committee of the London Fabian Society."<sup>23</sup>

There was friendship and cooperation between these leading suffragettes and the Socialist Party. That this joint relationship continued is shown by another special article by Mrs. Blatch in the *New York Call* some six years after the first on the subject, "How to Work for the Vote in New York State."<sup>24</sup> Along with other suggestions she wrote: "If between now and November, there is any parade to be held, one section should be devoted by the women of the party to proclaiming pictorially the need of Votes for Women."

On Oct. 3, 1911, according to the Socialist Party records at the Tamiment Library, another letter to Local Socialist Party of New York—this one from the Women's Trade Union League—stated: "The League voted to endorse your demand for a City Charter Convention." The League's letter was signed by Helen Marot, secretary.

Similarly, the Consumers League of the City of New York, in a letter on Nov. 9, 1912 (Tamiment Library archives), invited the Woman's Committee of the Socialist Party to take part in a Conference on Minimum Wage Legislation in behalf of underpaid women workers. The

22. *New York Call*, May 1, 1909, p. 7.

23. *The Comrade*, October, 1902, p. 58.

24. *New York Call*, Feb. 28, 1915, p. 9.



letter was signed by Belle L. Israels, chairman of a committee that included Frances Perkins as a member.

In Cleveland about this time (April, 1914) the Socialist Party of Ohio publicly endorsed the Woman's Suffrage Party's petition for the vote.<sup>25</sup>

In Socialist Party records is a letter from Lucy Burns, vice-chairman of the Congressional Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association at Washington, D.C., Sept. 13, 1913, asking Julius Gerber, Socialist Organizer of the New York Local, for "the names of foreign Socialists who have been admitted to this country after having suffered imprisonment for political offenses in their own country." Her question was precipitated by the fact that Mrs. Sylvia Pankhurst, who had been jailed in England for suffrage militancy, was coming to the United States to lecture, and it was thought advisable to have precedents that would help her get into this country. The organization that Miss Burns spoke for had Dr. Anna Howard Shaw as president, Jane Addams as first vice-president, and "C. Anita Whitney" (who later joined the Socialist Party and still later the Communist Party) as second vice-president. Other members of the committee included Alice Paul, Crystal Eastman Benedict (sister of Max Eastman), and Mrs. Mary Beard.

Gerber referred Miss Burns to the Socialists' attorney for refugees, Simon Pollock. When Mrs. Pankhurst arrived at Ellis Island, the old gimmick of "moral turpitude" was raised against her. But publicity in the *Call* and legal action in the courts won her freedom, and she spoke, as scheduled, at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 20, 1913, along with Charles Edward Russell, Socialist candidate for mayor of New York.<sup>26</sup>

Leading women Socialists were also suffragists, and helped to advance the suffrage cause. First among these is Florence Kelley. As translator of Marx's lecture, *Free Trade*, delivered in Brussels in 1848, and of Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, she has a definite place in American socialist history. As mentioned earlier, she went into the Socialist Labor Party, but left because of the sectarianism which prevented fruitful social work. Later she joined the Socialist Party, and was for a long time active in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. But perhaps it was her fight against child labor and in favor of shorter hours and safeguards for women workers, and her support of woman suffrage, that make her outstanding among American women. She was for years vice president of the National Woman Suffrage Association.<sup>27</sup> One of her

25. Oakley C. Johnson, *The Day Is Coming: Life and Work of Charles E. Ruthenberg*, International Publishers, New York, 1957, p. 84.

26. New York *Call*, Nov. 9, 1913, p. 15.

27. Dorothy Rose Blumberg, "Florence Kelley: Revolutionary Reformer," *Monthly Review*, November, 1959, pp. 234-242.

pamphlets was *What Women Might Do with the Ballot: the Abolition of Child Labor*, published by the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1912.<sup>28</sup> She was among the founders and builders of the N.A.A.C.P.

Kate Richards O'Hare, like Florence Kelley, joined the Socialist Labor Party first and then went to the Socialist Party. In the latter, Mrs. O'Hare became a member of the National Committee, and at one period was International Secretary. As editor of the *National Rip-Saw*, and as lecturer and pamphleteer, she had much influence among workers, especially women workers. She wrote the *Sorrows of Cupid* (1909), *Law and the White Slaver* (1911), and other pamphlets. She wrote a drama against war, and served in prison for opposition to war. She held the highest party posts of any woman, and probably gave more speeches for socialism than anyone else, except perhaps Eugene V. Debs. Mrs. O'Hare was a strong supporter of the votes-for-women movement. "All through the west and southwest," she told a Socialist conference in 1910, "I find it is not impossible at all for a Socialist to go in and take an active part in the woman suffrage movement without sacrificing her Socialist principles in the slightest degree."<sup>29</sup> Mrs. O'Hare, mother of four, was a member of the International Association of Machinists.<sup>30</sup>

Margaret Haile of Massachusetts tried to reform the Socialist Labor Party from within, then became associated with Debs in organizing the Social Democracy in 1897, and was a member of its platform committee. She withdrew from the Social Democracy—with Debs—when the Social Democratic Party (soon to be the Socialist Party) was set up in 1900. The seceding Social Democratic organizing committee of which she was a leading member met in Hull House when the turn was made toward real socialism. Margaret Haile had contributed a woman's column in 1894 to *Justice*, a Rhode Island paper, and to other papers. She was a teacher and journalist by profession, and a friend and co-worker of Antoinette Konikow, noted Socialist woman. Miss Haile has been almost forgotten, but in her day she was a power in social causes. Frederic Heath's *Socialism in America*, published in January, 1900, lists her, along with Corinne S. Brown and Eugene V. Debs, as among "One Hundred Well-known Social Democrats."<sup>31</sup>

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was founder in November, 1909, of *The Forerunner*, a remarkable one-woman 32-page publication in which she

28. Another of her pamphlets, *The Working Child*, published in Chicago back in 1896, is in the N. Y. Public Library, marked as "Gift of F. A. Sorge." Sorge was the secretary of the First International, 1872-1876.

29. *Proceedings*, National Congress of the Socialist Party, May 15-20, 1910.

30. *Progressive Woman*, August, 1910, p. 2.

31. Frederic Heath, *Socialism in America*, January, 1900, p. 127.

wrote all the copy. In the first issue she comments on the policy of her paper: "Is it a socialist magazine? It is a magazine for humanity, and humanity is social. It holds that Socialism, the economic theory, is part of our gradual Socialization, and that the duty of conscious humanity is to promote Socialization."<sup>32</sup> In the third number she wrote: "If you are a believer in women's voting, why don't you take the best equal suffrage paper in the country? Not the *Forerunner*—which is only a suffrage paper because of its interest in women, and only a woman's paper because of its interest in humanity, but this one: 'Vol. XL, *The Woman's Journal*, founded by Lucy Stone and Henry B. Blackwell.'" In the issue of October, 1910, Mrs. Gilman has a poem which for a time was quoted often: "The Socialist and The Suffragist," here are the first two stanzas and the final one:

Said the Socialist to the Suffragist:

"My cause is greater than yours!

You only work for a Special Class,

We for the gain of the General Mass,

Which every good ensures!"

Said the Suffragist to the Socialist:

"You underrate my Cause!

While women remain a Subject Class,

You can never move the General Mass,

With your Economic Laws!"

. . . . .

The world awoke, and tartly spoke:

"Your work is all the same;

Work together or work apart,

Work, each of you, with all your heart—

Just get into the game!"

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn said in the *Political Affairs* article referred to earlier: "Next to Bebel's *Women Under Socialism*, a book on my shelf I treasure is *Women and Economics*, published in 1898 by Charlotte Perkins Gilman." In a sense, Mrs. Gilman epitomizes the inseparable link between every Socialist woman and the fight for suffrage. Some Socialist women made suffrage their chief work, but all Socialists, men and women both, were by definition for it.

Ella Reeve Bloor, whose long Socialist career began in the 1890's in the Socialist Labor Party, continued after 1900 in the Socialist Party. Her two main interests were the defense of workers wherever they went on

32. *The Forerunner*, November, 1909, p. 32; January, 1910, p. 29; October, 1910, p. 25.

strike, and advocacy of woman suffrage. Mrs. Bloor was the first woman in Connecticut to run for public office. She was candidate for Secretary of State in 1910.<sup>33</sup> One of the high points of her early life was at the Socialist Party Convention, May 15-21, 1910, in Chicago, when she led the fight for a forthright official alignment of the Socialist Party with the equal suffrage organizations. It was objected by many Socialists that to join forces with non-Socialist organizations would blur class lines and obliterate working class consciousness. Mrs. Bloor argued, among other things: "While the Socialist Party should never merge its identity in any other movement, we should not place ourselves in a voluntary position of isolation, where the principles and aims of our party fully coincide with those of other organizations. We should heartily support the general movement of the women of America for their enfranchisement. In this case, as in many similar cases, Socialism must break through the narrow circle of our own organization and must penetrate into the masses of the people, as a living and vivifying social force." Caroline A. Lowe, another well-known Socialist woman leader, seconded the Bloor proposal, and Kate Richards O'Hare also supported it, but the sectarian forces at the Congress proved stronger. The position was taken that a Socialist can always work for equal suffrage wherever he or she happens to be, without the broad endorsement that the Bloor motion would have provided.<sup>34</sup>

Anita C. Block joined the Socialist Party in 1907 and started her memorable "Woman's Sphere" department in the New York *Call* in 1911, continuing it for about five years. Alongside the heading "Woman's Sphere," Mrs. Block was careful to place the explanatory subhead: "Today the Human Sphere, Unlimited, Unbounded." As a believer in the equality of men and women, she insisted that woman's "sphere" was the entire globe and everything in it. This "woman's" page was one of the most important features of the *Call*. It contained writings on birth-control by Margaret Sanger, the first such articles ever to appear in an American newspaper. It carried the polemic between Florence Kelley and the California Socialist, Agnes H. Downing, on how best to end child labor (in which Florence Kelley had rather the better of the argument). It also carried Agnes Downing's article on "What Socialists are Doing for the California Suffrage Amendment"; pieces by Jeannette D. Pearl on workers' education; "Musings of a Socialist Woman: Is *Motherhood* the Supreme Ideal of a Woman's Life?" by Antoinette Konikow; and "The Working Woman's Share in the American Woman Movement," by Meta L. Stern. It had poems by Daisy Sanial Gill (daughter of Lucien Sanial), and

33. *Progressive Woman*, September, 1910.

34. *Proceedings*, National Congress of the Socialist Party, Chicago, 1910.



by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, among others. It had book reviews; and of course Mrs. Block's own incisive and often ironic editorials, such as "Chivalry Once More," a comment on the Georgia Legislature's action in denying women the right to practice law in that state.<sup>35</sup>

The story of Margaret Sanger's work on the *Call* told in her *Autobiography*, 1938, merits notice. Anita Block called together a group of young mothers to ask questions of Margaret Sanger. The answers became a series of articles in "Woman's Sphere" under the title, *What Every Mother Should Know*. Then Mrs. Block asked for a second series on *What Every Girl Should Know*, and these were published, too—until the Post Office censor intervened.<sup>36</sup> Mrs. Sanger says her father was a Socialist and a friend of Debs, and "Therefore I joined the Socialist Party, Local Number Five," of which Anita Block and her husband, S. John Block, attorney, were members.

At least one of the New York *Call's* editorials, probably written by Mrs. Block, but not on the "Woman's Sphere" page, deserves special attention. Entitled "Woman and the Franchise," it was written with an acid pen. It called on the coming national convention of the Socialist Party to do more for suffrage than the Party had yet done. Let the Convention this year, the editorial said, "make the matter of the enfranchisement of women one of the things on which we fight a great and memorable campaign." In 1915, during the fight for the vote, Mrs. Block addressed the New York State Legislature as a representative of the Socialist Party, "the only political party," she said, "which unequivocally demands the suffrage for women."

The name of Louella Twining is selected to introduce a group of Socialist women who were especially active in suffrage work. Miss Twining was one of three delegates to the Second International in 1910, the others being May Wood Simons and Lena Morrow Lewis. It happened that Miss Twining got the floor and brought up the subject of the suffrage for women. Her speech was translated by Clara Zetkin, the leading advocate of women's rights in Europe and the one who proposed that the American Woman's Day be made International Woman's Day. *The Progressive Woman* reported that Clara Zetkin gave a "very spirited translation" of Miss Twining's speech.<sup>37</sup> In a later issue there is an article by Miss Twining entitled "At Monte Carlo with the Lafargues." She re-

35. New York *Call*, Jan. 21, 1912; Sept. 17, 1911; Feb. 25, 1912; March 12, March 21, April 21, 1912; Aug. 13, 1911; May 5, 1912.

36. *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1938, p. 76.

37. *The Progressive Woman*, October, 1910, p. 2.

mained in Europe long enough to visit Paul and Laura Lafargue, and she gives a fascinating picture of this aging white-haired couple, the son-in-law and daughter, respectively, of Karl Marx. She writes that Paul Lafargue "reminds me of Eugene V. Debs in his gentleness," and adds "He reads *The Progressive Woman* every month." Louella Twining came naturally by her interest in women's rights. Her mother, Mrs. Florence Twining, was a Socialist and a suffragist, and they lived in Colorado where both were voters.

May Wood Simons, wife of A. M. Simons, also spoke at the international Congress, and her speech, the N. Y. *Call* reported, "was a credit to American Socialism and the women of America."

Lena Morrow Lewis, wife of Arthur Morrow Lewis, and the third American woman at the international gathering, was a newspaper woman and a long time lecturer and organizer for the Socialist Party. She was the first woman to be elected to the National Committee, preceding Kate Richards O'Hare, and, according to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, she enlisted the support of Chicago trade unions for suffrage back in 1899.

Mrs. Marguerite Prevey, a distinguished professional woman of Cleveland, Ohio, was the first national woman's organizer to be chosen by the Socialist Party. This was in 1908, and her job was to "work for equal, civil and political rights among women and their organization in the Socialist Party." She may be taken as a type of balanced, sincere, far-seeing Socialist woman who over the years were Socialists and at the same time workers for suffrage.<sup>38</sup>

Anna A. Maley of New York, stenographer by profession, was the second national woman's organizer, chosen in 1909.<sup>39</sup> Two years later, Anita Block reported in *Woman's Sphere*—under the meaningful heading, "Anna A. Maley, Editor and Voter"—that this Socialist was editing *The Commonwealth*, a weekly paper published in Everett, Washington. "It is with envy," Mrs. Block said, "that we realize Anna Maley is working for Socialism in a state where she is a political factor." Women could vote in Washington.<sup>40</sup>

There was also Caroline A. Lowe, who in 1912 was general correspondent for the Woman's National Committee. Her articles in the N. Y. *Call*, in which she reviewed the reports made to the national office by local women's socialist organizations all over the country, are still interesting reading. They reveal, for one thing, that Socialist women had to re-

38. Oakley C. Johnson, *The Day Is Coming: Life & Work of Charles E. Ruthenberg*, International Publishers, New York, 1957, p. 29-30.

39. *Progressive Woman*, June, 1909, p. 5.

40. N. Y. *Call*, Oct. 8, 1911.

educate quite a proportion of Socialist men on the subject of women's participation in politics.<sup>41</sup>

Josephine Conger-Kaneko, whose husband, Kliichi Kaneko, was a Japanese, was founder and editor of the monthly *Progressive Woman* (for the first year it was called the *Socialist Woman*) in 1907, and kept it going for several years. During those years she centered attention on all active Socialist women, reported their doings, published their photos and their articles, and, as a regular feature, gave a biographical sketch of a Socialist woman each month. She always emphasized woman suffrage as a part of Socialist work. *The Progressive Woman* is a mine of information for the historian interested in the progress of American women.

May McDonald Strickland, wife of Frederick G. Strickland, and one of the magazine's featured women, was state secretary of the Socialist Party of Indiana.<sup>42</sup> Katharine M. Debs, identified as Mrs. Eugene V. Debs, is quoted prominently on "Right of Women to Vote." Mila Tupper Maynard is described as having been a Unitarian preacher for a while, then a reporter on the *Rocky Mountain News*, and then a Socialist lecturer and propagandist. May Walden—Mrs. Charles H. Kerr of the publishing firm—is quoted as saying "The Twentieth Century is Woman's." Winnie Branstetter, assistant state secretary of the Socialist Party of Oklahoma, argues, "Socialist Party Should Make a More Active Propaganda for Female Suffrage." Lida Parce Robinson, ex-president of the Arizona Equal Suffrage Association, has an article entitled "Victory and Defeat in Arizona," in which she describes how the women got the equal suffrage bill through both houses of the legislature by a two-thirds vote, only to have it vetoed by the governor; a bitter, sarcastic article. A biographic feature introduces us to Grace D. Brewer, a former schoolteacher, now a stenographer for the editor of the *Appeal to Reason*, and already a writer and speaker in her own right. "Socialism is unthinkable," she says, "without the full and unequivocal rights of women along with men." Only a taste is given here, but it indicates what this notable publication did. Ella Reeve Bloor, Rose Pastor Stokes, Kate Richards O'Hare, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—these better-known women were also, of course, featured in *The Progressive Woman*.

Kate Sadler Greenhalgh has recently been rescued from near-oblivion by Harvey O'Connor in *Revolution in Seattle* (1964), who describes her as "the most extraordinary person in the Seattle radical movement." He adds: "In the Pacific Northwest Kate was the peerless socialist orator and among women was rivaled nationally only by Kate Richards O'Hare and

41. N. Y. *Call*, Jan. and Feb. 11, 1912.

42. *Progressive Woman*, Sept., 1918, p. 2; July, 1910, p. 2; Oct., 1910, cover; Vol. I, No. 9, p. 4; Dec., 1907, p. 5, etc.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn." Mrs. Sadler devoted most attention to organizing workers and opposing war, but she was a Socialist, and her example inspired other women.<sup>43</sup>

Along with Kate Sadler we may recall other western and mid-western women, including Mrs. Corinne S. Brown rather slightly referred to by Daniel De Leon in *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*.<sup>44</sup> *The Progressive Woman*, however, speaks of her as follows: "If ever the history of the pioneers in the Socialist movement in America is written, the name of Corinne Stubs Brown will stand unchallenged for the most vital, courageous and brilliant woman in their ranks." She became widely known as president of the Illinois Woman's Alliance. Henry Demarest Lloyd once said of her, "Mrs. Brown is like a salt breeze blowing over pine woods." Eugene V. Debs called her "The Stormy Petrel." She was a Socialist Party delegate to the Amsterdam Congress in 1904 along with Herman Schluter, labor historian, and that is where De Leon saw her. She was a determined worker for woman suffrage.

Another westerner was Mrs. Ida Crouch-Hazlett who was a newspaper woman in Denver, Colorado, one of the first states in which women could vote. She was a national organizer of the Woman Suffrage Association from 1896 to 1901, and from then to 1921 a lecturer for the Socialist Party. She was a candidate for Congress in 1902 on the Socialist ticket—"first woman parliamentary candidate in the world," according to Solon De Leon's *American Labor Who's Who*.<sup>45</sup>

Still another westerner was Charlotte Anita Whitney, who had a long record as a fighter for equal suffrage, being organizer of the National College Equal Suffrage League, 1911-13, and president of the California Equal Suffrage League, 1911-12. She joined the Socialist Party in 1914, according to her biographer, Al Richmond, in *Native Daughter*.<sup>46</sup>

Iowa-born Cynthia H. Van Names Leonard was so fiery a partisan of equal rights as to come under censure by Daniel De Leon more than half a century ago in his *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*.<sup>47</sup> She had evidently been a delegate to an earlier Socialist Congress at Zurich. From the autobiography of A. Cahan, *Bletten Fun Mein Leben*,<sup>48</sup> and from *The Promised City* by Moses Rischin,<sup>49</sup> we learn that Cynthia Leonard—a stately, white-haired lady—was a leading member of the Socialist Labor Party local they belonged to in the 80's. She was the mother of Lillian

43. Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle*, Monthly Review Press, 1964, p. 43.

44. Daniel De Leon, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, 1906, p. 44.

45. Solon De Leon, *American Labor Who's Who*, 1925, p. 51-2.

46. Al Richmond, *Native Daughter: The Story of Anita Whitney*, 1942, p. 249.

47. *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, p. 107.

48. A. Cahan, *Bletten fun Mein Leben*, Vol. II, pp. 307-308.

49. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City*, 1962, p. 225.



Russell. According to Lillian Russell's biographer—Parker Morell, *Lillian Russell: the Era of Plush*—the actress's mother, Cynthia Leonard, ran for mayor of New York in the election of 1884.<sup>50</sup>

A contemporary of Corinne S. Brown and Cynthia Leonard was Bertha Washburne Howe, who was also our recent contemporary. She died in Florida at the age of 104, active in social causes. Her life had been a blend of the Free Thought Society, the struggle for Negro equality, the movement for Woman Suffrage, and the Socialist cause. She read her first copy of the *Communist Manifesto* around the turn of the century and joined the Socialist Party about 1906. Among her contributions to the *New York Call*, were "Restricted Suffrage" and "Woman Suffrage and the Class Struggle."<sup>51 52</sup>

Among prominent Socialists whom we might class as college women are Vida Dutton Scudder, Jessie Wallace Hughan, and Anna Rochester. All were interested in suffrage and peace. Professor Scudder was on the faculty of Wellesley College from 1910 for many years as a teacher of English literature. Her books, *Social Ideals in English Letters* (1898), and *Socialism and Character* (1912), were very influential among young women of her time.

Jessie Wallace Hughan earned her doctorate at Columbia University in 1910, and was a leader in the Young Peoples Socialist League from 1909 on. Her books, *American Socialism of the Present Day* (1910), *The Facts of Socialism* (1914), and *The Socialism of Today* (1916), were used as texts by a generation of young people. She contributed material to Alexander Trachtenberg's *American Labor Year Books*.

Anna Rochester, who studied at Bryn Mawr, joined the Socialist Party in 1910, and was later on the executive committee of the Young People's Socialist League (re-named afterward the League for Industrial Democracy). She was a research worker on the National Child Labor Committee, 1912-15, and for the U. S. Children's Bureau, 1915-21. Her activities during most of her life concerned the welfare of children, while her political interests were with the struggle for workers' and women's rights. Miss Rochester lived in New York, dying in 1966.

Rose Pastor Stokes, the beautiful Polish immigrant girl and strike leader, who married the millionaire J. G. Phelps Stokes, was not a college woman, but she was a poet, playwright, editor, journalist and lecturer, and a leader in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. She was active also in the Woman's Trade Union League, and, from 1905 on, in the Socialist Party.

50. Parker Morell, *Lillian Russell: the Era of Plush*, 1940, p. 71.

51. *N. Y. Call*, Dec. 30, 1910, p. 4; June 10, 1910, editorial page.

52. Oakley C. Johnson, *An American Century: Recollections of Bertha W. Howe*. Humanities Press, New York. 1966.

With Charlotte Perkins Gilman, she exemplifies the propagandist who is also an artist.

Meta L. Stern, who made a new translation of Bebel's *Woman* to displace De Leon's, may serve to introduce a group of talented Socialist Leaders and equal rights advocates who include Mary E. Marcy, an editor of *International Socialist Review* and author of *Shop Talks on Economics* (1911); Theresa Serber Malkiel, author of *Woman and Freedom* (1911), member of the Socialist Suffrage Committee in 1915, polemicist against Ella Reeve Bloor earlier at the 1910 Socialist Party Congress, contending that working women should have their own separate equal rights campaign; Hortense Allison Wagenknecht of Oregon and Ohio, wife of Alfred Wagenknecht, and a militant member of the Socialist National Woman's Committee in 1912; Claire Strong Broms of Minnesota, school teacher, industrial unionist and admirer of William D. Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn; and Mother Jones, who in 1915, during the miners' strikes, warned suffragettes, "The women of Colorado have had the vote for two generations and the working men and women are in slavery."

A place must be made here for the un-groupables: Helen Keller, Socialist, who stood for all good causes and all oppressed people; Emma Lazarus of Jewish descent, author of the Statue of Liberty poem, "Mother of Exiles," who, according to her biographer, Eve Merriam, expressed pride to find "the fathers of modern socialism to be three Jews—Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, and Johann Jacoby . . .";<sup>53</sup> Maud Malone, shy and gentle New York librarian, who in 1905 started the Harlem Equal Rights League, in 1909 carried a "Votes for Women" placard down Broadway on St. Patrick's Day, in 1912, when presidential candidates Roosevelt and Wilson addressed election rallies, stood up and asked them, "Shall the Women Vote?" and in 1917 served sixty days in jail, along with other suffragettes, for picketing the White House;<sup>54</sup> and Helen Holman, Negro woman orator, friend of Kate Richards O'Hare and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who was listened to and admired by Richard B. Moore, himself a noted Black speaker.

Marxism had, and has an immeasurably larger and longer perspective than Woman Suffrage. It did not, to be sure, initiate the struggle for it, any more than it *initiated* the struggle for Negro emancipation or the eight-hour day or the Direct Election of United States Senators: but it took part in all these, and in many other struggles. It has been an important factor in American social reform movements, and a decisive one in some.

53. Eve Merriam, *Emma Lazarus: Woman With a Torch*, Citadel Press, New York, 1956, p. 101.

54. *Daily Worker*, Feb. 14 and Feb. 18, 1951.

## VII

## Marxism and the American Christian Church

I joined the Congregational Church in a small town in Michigan in 1902, when I was twelve years old. I left about five years later because I read Unitarian tracts questioning the divinity of Christ and the authenticity of bible miracles.

Then in 1912, when I was 22, I joined the Socialist Party of Michigan, and cast my ballot for Eugene V. Debs for president.

I thus had an early experience in both Christianity and Marxism, and implicit in this was an urge to straighten out my own relationship to each of these bodies of thought.

Like everyone else—or *almost* everyone else!—I had heard of Marx's oft-quoted statement, "Religion is the opium of the people," and I had no reason to reject it. However, there soon came something of a logical crisis for me, which I wasn't really prepared to meet. It was in early 1919 that the Socialist Party of Michigan, under a rather sectarian Left Wing leadership which at that time I supported, declared in so many words that as a part of its political work it would "explain" and oppose religion. That in part is why the Michigan group became the first state organization to be formally expelled by the Socialist Party of America later that year, not long before the formation of the Communist Party.

Thus in my first seven years as a Marxist I was brought face to face with the subject I am now discussing, and I've given it quite a bit of study and thought in the half-century since.

First of all, let us look again at that quotation I spoke of, about the "opium of the people."

What Marx actually said, and its context, is this:

"Religious distress is at the same time the expression of *real distress* and the *protest against* real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed

creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." Thus wrote Marx in 1844, when he was 26 years old. Humanist that he was, he regarded religion as a protest against distress and as a sigh of the oppressed, as well as, eventually, an opiate.<sup>1</sup>

This puts the religious question in a different light. As for the anti-religious stand by the Socialist Party of Michigan in 1919, I learned much later that Marxists do not approve of dividing workers politically on the basis of religion, any more than on the basis of language or color. Workers need to be united politically (as well as economically) on the basis of their common interests, and on nothing else.

Nevertheless, in trying to reach people with a new idea, old ideas continually pop up and must be answered. In their approach, therefore, the propagators of Socialism did not leave Christianity out of account. For example, the Socialist orator, Kate Richards O'Hare, an editor of the *National Rip-Saw*, argued directly with church people in her pamphlet, *The Church and the Social Problem*, published in 1911.<sup>2</sup>

You say that the Socialists are un-Christian and atheistic," she begins. "That may be, according to your ideas; but this I know, irreligious as we may be, we are doing Christ's work, trying to make *your* religion live and livable, and doing our best to place as the four corner stones of our government the four fundamentals of Christ's law.

If the Church won't do its duty, then the Socialist movement must do it, and I am with the force that does things.

The Socialists shamed the Church for ignoring social oppression, and some leaders of the Church responded—with good works.

The Socialists also used irony in confronting the Church. Paul Lafargue, one of Karl Marx's sons-in-law, wrote his celebrated squib on *The Religion of Capital*,<sup>3</sup> which contained this "Confession of Faith":

I believe in Capital, the ruler of body and mind.

I believe in Profit, His Right-hand Bower, and in Credit, His Left-hand Bower, both of which proceed from and are one with Him.

1. Selsam, Howard and Harry Martel, eds., *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1963, p. 227. On this whole question, see H. Aptheker, *The Urgency of the Marxist-Christian Dialogue*, N. Y., 1970, Harper & Row.

2. O'Hare, Kate Richards, *The Church and the Social Problem*. 1911. (Rip-Saw Series No. 2: 32-page pamphlet.)

3. Lafargue, Paul, *The Religion of Capital*. Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association, 184 William Street, New York. (Socialist Library, Published Monthly, Vol. II, No. 2, March 15, 1902.)



I believe in Gold and Silver . . . .

I believe in Dividends . . . .

I believe in Private Property, the fruit of the labor of others; and

I also believe in its existence from and for all time.

I believe in the eternity of the Wage System . . . .

And so on.

This mockery was doubtless annoying to quite a few religious persons, but it was also difficult to argue against, because, after all, Christ said, "Ye can't serve God and Mammon."

One might think that neither the challenge of Kate Richards O'Hare nor that of Paul Lafargue would win converts to Socialism, but that would be a mistake. Here, however, are three examples of the kind that forced me to re-shape my opinions again and again.

In the Tamiment Library in New York (This is really the old Rand School Library of the Socialist Party of half a century ago), where a considerable quantity of old Socialist Party records are kept, I found a letter addressed to Julius Gerber, Organizer, Socialist Party, New York, dated June 15, 1911. It begins "Dear Comrade" and ends, "Thy Comrade, Annie Wright," of Brooklyn, New York. I knew there was a Quaker Socialist society in England, but this was the first sign I had found of Quaker Socialists in the United States.

Then, a California journalist, Reuben W. Borough,<sup>4</sup> told me in a letter that in Marshall, Michigan, where he went to high school in the early days of this century, the rector of the Episcopal Church gave him his first copy of *The Appeal to Reason*, the Socialist paper edited by J. A. Wayland.

A few years ago, Clarence Hathaway, former editor of the New York *Daily Worker*, told me that as a teen-ager he had been influenced in a leftward direction by a liberal pastor in his home town in Minnesota, the Reverend David Morgan.

To what extent, in fact, has Marxism influenced Christianity in the United States? And in what way has Christianity influenced the expression of Marxism in this country?

An answer may be approached by considering some Christian Socialist pastors who acknowledged Marxist influence and played an outstanding religio-political role.

#### *Professor George Davis Herron (1862-1925)*

Professor Herron was a Congregational pastor who began his radical career in 1891 when he delivered a sermon to the Minnesota State

4. Borough, Reuben W., contributor to Helen Alfred's *Toward a Socialist America* (1958), is writing his autobiography.

Association of Congregationalist Ministers entitled "The Message of Jesus Christ to Men of Wealth." In 1893 he became Professor of Applied Christianity at Grinnell College, Iowa, and held that position for six years. In 1900 he joined Eugene V. Debs in organizing the Socialist Party of America, and delivered the nomination speech for Debs as president.

Herron's wealthy mother-in-law, Mrs. Carrie Rand, established the endowment for the founding of the Rand School of Social Science in 1906, which was the center of Marxist activity in the United States for a generation.

When he nominated Debs for President, Herron delivered a hard-hitting campaign speech in which he revealed that he had already been voting the Socialist Labor Party ticket for eight years. He implied that now, with the new party headed by Debs, the Socialist movement might take "its coherent and conquering form in the politics of America."<sup>5</sup>

Explaining why he was supporting Socialism, he said: "Socialism comes not as a remedy for the evils of existing society, but as a program of principles for a new society; or rather, let us say, as the first proposition for social order that has ever been presented to the world."

Three years later, on the occasion of honoring the Paris Commune, when Herron gave his great lecture, "From Revolution to Revolution,"<sup>6</sup> he took the opportunity to defend the Marxist principle of class consciousness:

"I know," he said, "that the term 'class consciousness' is offensive to many, both without and within the socialist movement. I know that it is often used in a way that makes it seem like a tiresome and commonplace cant. Those who do not understand the term mistake class consciousness for class hatred. None the less, it remains true that until the working class becomes more vividly and intensely conscious of itself than it now is, until it realizes that it is the disinherited owner of the world that it has built on its own back, until it understands that there can be no possible identity of interest or reconciliation between itself and the employing or ruling class, its struggle toward emancipation will be blind and unintelligent, betrayed and baffled and compromised, and without that nobility of comprehension which should mark the greatest cause to which man has ever been summoned."

5. Herron, Prof. George Davis, "Why I Am a Socialist." Address at a Mass Meeting of the Social Democratic Party at Central Music Hall, Chicago, Sept. 29, 1900. (Pocket Library of Socialism, No. 20, Charles H. Kerr & Co., 153 E. Kinzie St., Chicago, Ill. Also published by the Headquarters of the Social Democratic Party, 126 Washington Ave., Chicago.)

6. Herron, Prof. George Davis, *From Revolution to Revolution*. An Address in Faneuil Hall, March 21, 1903. Published by the Comrade Co-operative Company.

*The Reverend Charles Henry Vail (1866-1924):*

The Rev. Charles H. Vail was, like Herron, a socialist in the days of the Socialist Labor Party, before the Socialist Party of Debs was organized. Vail wrote his *Modern Socialism* in 1897. It was published by the Commonwealth Company of New York which also published many other socialist titles, including *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* by Frederick Engels, *The Right to Be Lazy* by Paul Lafargue, *Woman in the Past, Present and Future* by August Bebel, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire* by Karl Marx.

Vail produced a later and better book, *The Principles of Scientific Socialism*, in 1899, published by the Comrade Cooperative Publishing Company of New York, the first real Marxist textbook on Socialism in this country. It was re-published by the Charles H. Kerr Company of Chicago in 1908. I owned a copy of it about half a century ago, one of the first books on Socialism I ever read.

About 1900, Vail gave a lecture, "The Mission of the Working Class," in which he paid tribute to the Utopian socialists as forerunners, but added, "it was left for Karl Marx to clearly point out the genesis of surplus value and the evolutionary tendency in economics."

Vail was ordained in 1893, and belonged to the Universalist Church. His first pastorate was at the All Souls' Church, Albany, N.Y., 1893-1894. Then he went to First Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, 1894-1901, and during this period he became a Socialist. He continued in his church work for some years after that, while writing and lecturing on socialism.<sup>7</sup>

*Bishop Franklin Spencer Spalding (1865-1914):*

In the Tamiment Library in New York, is an obituary about the Right Reverend Franklin Spencer Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, killed in an automobile accident in 1914. He was known as "the Socialist Bishop," and every Party member in the United States mourned his passing.<sup>8</sup>

The full story of Bishop Spalding is told in the biography written by the Rev. John Howard Melish.<sup>9</sup> "Undoubtedly the most conspicuous fact in Bishop Spalding's life was his championship of the cause of the working man," says the biographer. "It was the passion of his life. He was an enthusiastic convert to the economic theories of Karl Marx and he saw

7. Vail, Rev. Charles Henry. *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. I, p. 1266.

8. *New York Call*, Sunday, Sept. 27, 1914, p. 7.

9. Melish, Rev. John Howard, *Franklin Spencer Spalding: Man and Bishop*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1917. (Pp. 236-256).

in Socialism the instrument by which, under God, the terrible wrongs and inequalities which mark the civilization of today were to be righted."

The author, Melish, an advanced liberal in his own right, was pastor of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn for many years.

Melish quotes Spalding as follows:

Behind all the movement for social uplift outside the religious organizations today, is a philosophy which is as yet unappropriated by the Church, and yet which is, I believe, true. It is based upon the fact that environment has most to do with the making of the product, and that therefore the chief work of any organization desiring success must be to create right conditions. Karl Marx called it "Materialistic Conception of History," an expression his followers soften into the "economic interpretation of history," and to the hundreds of thousands of socialists who follow him, it means that a new form of society must be worked for, if need be, fought for, in which the fundamental business of the State shall be, to give to each human being a supply for its physical needs. Man may not be able to live by bread alone, but first of all he must have bread, and today there are millions even in this land who are hungry, and who have inadequate shelter and clothing.

Spalding cast his first ballot for Socialism in 1908, when he supported Debs on the latter's third try for the presidency.

I cannot refrain from citing one further passage from Bishop Spalding, as quoted by Melish from *The Christian Socialist* magazine (November, 1911), which had asked him for a statement. "The Christian," said the Bishop, "has the advantage over Karl Marx because he knows the name of the Truth which illuminated Marx's mind, of the Power which gave him his moral courage and of the Love which made him faithful unto death. The Socialist, on the other hand, possesses in the 'Materialistic Conception of History' and the 'Class Struggle,' two truths which the Christian must learn."

*Bouck White (1874-1951)*

Bouck White was educated at Harvard University, the Boston Theological Seminary, and the Union Theological Seminary in New York. His first job was as head for five years of the Men's Social Service department of Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn.

But his fame began when he set up the Church of the Social Revolution in New York in the spring of 1914. It happened that the Ludlow Massacre took place about that time in John D. Rockefeller's Colorado



coal and iron mines, and Bouck White led his poor ragged congregation to Rockefeller's plush First Baptist Church on Fifth Avenue (they were only a few blocks apart) so that both church groups might pray together for a righteous solution to the trouble at Ludlow.

But the Rockefeller church called the cops. White was arrested for "disturbing the peace" and sent to prison for as many months as the law allowed. Debs and other Socialists hailed him, and he was a cause celebre.

When White was asked, while in prison, "What is the relation of our Church to the Socialist Party?" he made a forthright reply. He agreed to the suggestion that the Church—that is, his Church of the Social Revolution—was "a sister movement to the Party." But he preferred, he said, to say: "The Church of the Revolution is destined to be the soul, of which the Socialist Party is the body."<sup>10</sup>

Bouck White wrote *The Call of the Carpenter* (1911) and *The Carpenter and the Rich Man* (1914), gradually evolving what may be described as a Marx-influenced interpretation of the New Testament.

Some of this is indicated in his re-writing of the Apostles' Creed, which goes like this:

I believe in God, the Master most mighty, stirrer-up of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth, who was born of proletarian Mary, toiled at the work bench, descended into labor's hell, suffered under Roman tyranny at the hands of Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

And so on.

I'm not sure that Bouck White ever read Paul Lafargue's ironic creed, but we must see a degree of Marxist reaction in the efforts to re-do and improve the official religious credo.

#### *The Rev. Edward Ellis Carr*

The Rev. Edward Ellis Carr was in certain ways a phenomenon even among social-minded preachers. He was chief editor of the influential *Christian Socialist* magazine, published in Danville, Illinois, from the time of its founding in 1904-5 throughout its more than ten-year history. In 1907 he reported in its pages on his attendance as an official American delegate at the International Socialist Congress in Europe. *The Christian Socialist* always published the platforms and resolutions of the Socialist Party, and editorially supported Socialist candidates in the elections. Carr

10. White, Bouck, *Letters from Prison*. Introduction by Lucy Weeks Trimble. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1915. Also, Toronto: The Copp Clark Co., Ltd., 1915. (P. 45)

11. White, Bouck, *Letters from Prison*. (p. 14).

himself praised the Charles H. Kerr publishing company for its services in making available the works of Marx and Engels (though he disapproved of Paul Lafargue and Arthur Morrow Lewis, who he said wrote not to make socialists, but "to make atheists out of socialists").

Over the years he listed hundreds of preachers who announced support for socialism. *The Christian Socialist* exulted on May 15, 1908, that ten of the 216 delegates to the Socialist Party national convention of that year were Christian clergymen. Carr published special editions of his paper for Baptists, for Roman Catholics, for Lutherans, and so on, trying to reach every denomination.

*The Christian Socialist* reported with pride in the issues of June 1 and June 15, 1909, that at the Fourth General Conference of the Christian Socialist Fellowship, held in Toledo, Ohio, there were 26 delegates from seven states, and that Mayor Brand Whitlock of the host city gave an official Address of Welcome.

The magazine was remarkably successful in securing and printing contributions of one sort or another from a wide variety of notables, including not only Socialist Party leaders but others: Edwin Markham, poet; Horace Mann, educator; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, author; as well as Clarence Darrow, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and a long list of others.

Up to the time of World War I, *The Christian Socialist* could be described, I suppose, as a "party line" publication, but at that time patriotism intervened. The Socialist Party resisted United States entry into the war; *The Christian Socialist*, on the other hand, urged United States participation.

#### *The Rev. Father Thomas McGrady (1863-1909):*

There have been Roman Catholic Socialists, too, who paid honor to Karl Marx.

Father McGrady was rector of St. Anthony's Church, Bellevue, Kentucky, around the turn of the century, and when he died, in 1909, Eugene V. Debs wrote his obituary in *The Appeal to Reason*, which was reprinted in *The Christian Socialist*.<sup>12</sup>

Father McGrady wrote several socialist pamphlets, one of which was "A Plea for Social Democracy," published by Standard Publishing Company, Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1901.

"If our powers of productivity have been multiplied twenty-fold

12. *The Christian Socialist*, Vols. 5-6, Jan. 1, 1909. Debs' obituary on Father McGrady is on p. 2.

within the last half-century," he wrote, "then we should have twenty times the amount of comforts for the same application of labor in the days of our fathers. But such is not the case. Poverty has everywhere kept pace with the march of progress."

He asked: "Are your ears deaf to the lamentations that echo throughout this great land, from ocean to ocean, and from the Gulf to the Lakes? Are your hearts callous to the widow's wail and the orphan's cry?"

Going on, he analyzed the existing situation, and declared:

"The result of our economic system is seen in the growth of poverty among the toilers, and the amassment of great wealth by the idlers and parasites of society.

"Give the laboring man the full value of his labor, and there will be no hard times, no stagnation of industry, no strikes, no look outs, no crises, no failures, and, above all, the land will not be cursed with over-production, while millions are starving and in tatters."

Continuing, he said: "Socialism will give every man an opportunity. It will make all men free and equal. Under it there will be no privileged class, and *this* is why it has been so obstinately opposed."

An illuminating article was written by Father McGrady for *The Comrade* (predecessor of the *Masses*), Vol. II, No. 1, (1902), under the title, "How I Became a Socialist."

He wrote: "I perused the works of Laurence Gronlund, Bellamy, Vail, Sprague, and other Socialist writers, and became acquainted with the three great ideas of Karl Marx, and before the end of '99, I was firmly convinced that the collective ownership and administration of capital for the benefit of all the people was the only rational solution of the industrial problem. In the early part of 1900 I wrote to Father Hagerty, who was then rector of the Catholic Church at Cleburne, Texas, informing him that I was a disciple of Marx."

Father T. J. Hagerty, in replying, congratulated him.

Father Hagerty, was one of the organizers of the I. W. W. in 1905. He, Debs and Daniel De Leon brain-trusted that remarkable trade union effort. Hagerty designed the circular emblem, often called "Hagerty's Wheel."

In one of his pamphlets Hagerty quoted the Irish proverb: "We take our religion from Rome, but our politics from home."

#### *Bishop William Montgomery Brown (1855-1937):*

Bishop William Montgomery Brown was an old-fashioned fundamentalist cleric in Galion, Ohio, until 1911 when, while recuperating from an

illness, he read Darwin's *Origin of Species* for the first time. Then, in the midst of World War I, he heard of "the economic causes of war" from a letter by Miss Ella Bronzelle in a local newspaper. He got in touch with her, and she advised him to read Socialist literature. He did. He subscribed to the *National Rip Saw*, edited by Kate Richards O'Hare, and read dozens and hundreds of Socialist pamphlets, books and papers.

In later years, recalling his slow progress as a younger man, he said, candidly, "I was an ignoramus, but I was not a fool." He wanted the truth, he said, but only accidental events brought it near so that he could see it.

"Eventually," he said, in *My Belief: The Autobiography of an Idea*, "I read *Capital* by Karl Marx, a book and a writer of whom I had never heard before." His reading of *Capital* came after 1917, but his socialist beginnings, it seems clear, lay in the tumultuous months ending 1916 and starting 1917. He became a Socialist because he hated war.<sup>13</sup>

Bishop Brown's *Christianism and Communism* continued, in his unique and personal style, the battle for truth that his intellectual and moral awakening forced him—regardless of consequences—to take part in with all his might, even after the first half-century of his life had long since passed.

#### *The Rev. Albert Rhys Williams (1883-1962):*

The Rev. Mr. Williams died at his home in Ossining, New York, and perhaps I shouldn't at this time use the "Reverend" before his name. A year before his death he told me in a letter that his title had been "demitted," which is the term used when a clergyman, though not "unfrocked," voluntarily prefers to relinquish the title.

But he earned the title years before, for all that. Mr. Williams graduated from the Hartford Theological Seminary in 1907, and studied theology further at Cambridge, England, and at Marburg, Germany. He had a long career as a Congregational minister. According to *Who's Who in America*, he was "Minister and director Maverick Church and Forum," Boston, Massachusetts, from 1907 to 1914. Socialist solutions to social questions were discussed at the Forum, which was held in the church.

At this time, he made a radical change in his profession. He became a war correspondent, went to the Western Front, then to the Russian front, took an active part in the defense of Petrograd (he organized the Interna-

13. Wood, Charles W., "Is Bishop Brown Crazy?" Article in *Hearst's International*, December, 1923. (Quote: "How Bishop Brown arrived at his conclusion that there is no personal God is another story. Briefly, it was the war.")



tional Legion there), and eventually, returning to the United States, acted as a virtual spokesman for Lenin on questions of Soviet policy and of peace.

Williams' pamphlet, *The Bolsheviks and the Soviets*, was published by the Rand School of Social Science, New York, in 1919—and re-published the same year by both the People's Council, an anti-war committee in New York, and the National Office of the Socialist Party in Chicago. Later years he produced full-length books as well as pamphlets and lectures.

The foundation for Williams' long struggle for American-Soviet friendship was, however, laid in 1914, when he joined the Socialist Party.<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \*

The above does not exhaust the subject, by any means. I have not discussed clergymen who were elected to office on the Socialist ticket, such as the Rev. George R. Lunn, a Presbyterian, who became mayor of Schenectady, N.Y., in 1911. (His secretary was the young Walter Lippmann.) Nor the Rev. J. Stitt Wilson, who a little later (1914) became mayor of Berkeley, California. There is also the Rev. Frederic O. MacCartney, a Congregationalist, elected as a Socialist to the Massachusetts legislature in 1900. Incidentally, after becoming a Socialist, MacCartney switched to Unitarianism and was appointed assistant pastor to the Second Unitarian Church of Boston.

Furthermore I have omitted such noteworthy personalities as the Rev. Eliot White, Episcopalian, who was a delegate to the national convention of the Socialist Party in 1908; and the Rt. Rev. Paul Jones, Bishop of Utah (successor to Bishop Spalding), who listed himself as a socialist in *American Labor Who's Who*, edited by Solon De Leon; and A. J. Muste, who voted for Debs in 1912; and the Rev. W. S. Harris, who wrote *Capital and Labor* in 1907; and the Rev. Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister, who in 1901 gave a friendly critique of Marxist and pseudo-Marxist socialism that is worth studying today. Nor have I referred to the Rev. Alexander Irvine of the Church of the Ascension, New York, who boasted that he could make socialists in his church faster than a trade union organizer could; nor to the Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the New York Community Church.

Note also a Negro cleric, the Rev. George W. Woodbey, of California, author of the *Bible and Socialism: A Dialogue Between Two Preachers*,

14. Letter from Mr. Williams to the writer, May 9, 1960. Also see Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution*. Petrograd, 1917-18. Edited by Lucita Williams. Quadrangle Books, 1969.

published as a pamphlet in 1904. In this he speaks of Marx as "the great philosopher of modern times." Another Negro minister, the Rev. George Frazier Miller of Brooklyn, was a contributor to *The Messenger* which was founded in 1916-17 by A. Philip Randolph.

Usually Christians—at least those with a sense of history—speak of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Hence one should note forward-looking pro-Socialist thinkers like Rabbi Judah L. Magnes and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.<sup>15</sup> Then, of course, there are the anti-religious Rationalists and Free Thinkers, like William Thurston Brown<sup>16</sup> and Hugh O. Pentecost,<sup>17</sup> who were both Socialist Party members.

As to the Christian Socialism of the utopian period, in the mid-19th Century, it bore no overt relation to Marxism. Alexander Trachtenberg was right in differentiating between that earlier non-Marxist Christian Socialism, led by W. D. T. Bliss and Professor John R. Commons, which was "unconnected with the Socialist Party of that time," and the later Christian Socialism I have in part described.

"Since 1900, however," Trachtenberg wrote, "Christian Socialism has stood for the movement within the Socialist Party of those who believe that only by means of the Socialist Commonwealth can Christian principles be applied in society."<sup>18</sup>

In an article in *The Christian Socialist*, June 1, 1908, Rufus E. Weeks makes the point even more positively. He insists that really there can't be two kinds of socialism—"a Christian Socialism and a non-Christian Socialism": There is just *Socialism*. But the Christians have "a special motive of their own—the Christian motive"—for supporting Socialism. And they all, he says, uphold the basic teaching, the Marxist doctrine.

There is, of course, the reciprocal influence of the Church on the Marxist movement.

It may be justly argued that the moral quality of Christian teachings helped to emphasize the strong humanist strain already present in Marxism, and served as a bridge across which a dialogue between Socialism and Religion could be begun.

At the same time, Church influence brought about an over-emphasis on the forms of ethics and a weakening, at times, of working class

15. Morris U. Schappes, in *Jewish Life*, November, 1955, p. 18.

16. Brown, William Thurston, of the Free Thought Society of New York. Letter to Julius Gerber, Socialist Organizer, at Tamiment Library, states he has been a member of the Socialist Party for fourteen years. Dec. 31, 1912.

17. *The Truth Seeker*, March 19, 1910. Address by Mrs. Bertha W. Howe at memorial meeting for Hugh O. Pentecost says he left the church of which he was pastor and had joined the Socialist Party.

18. *American Labor Year Book*, 1916, p. 157. Item: "The Christian Socialists."

militancy. Some of the clerical Socialists, as shown by the record, supported the Party's Right Wing faction, even to the extent of accentuating racist and militarist emanations.

The greatest obstacle to the spread of Christian Socialism was the spread of supposedly Christian Capitalism. It may be true that, as the Rev. George E. Littlefield said in 1904 in the *Arena* magazine, Christians should vote for Socialism because "Socialism will make religion real." But of course the established churches as a whole overwhelmingly supported the status quo.

## VIII

# *Marxism and Youth Organizations Before 1917*

Socialists in this country, perhaps more than in Europe, found that their capitalist opposition attacked them on every side, in the church and the school as well as on the job and in political combat. Adult Socialists, toughened by strikes and enlightened by Marxist explanations of the history of capitalism, were able to withstand these assaults. But their children, in both Sunday School and the public schools, were endlessly propagandized by anti-Socialism. Children of Socialists were dismayed at hearing their parents described as criminals or traitors. Professors in colleges scoffed at socialism, identified socialism with anarchism, and praised "free enterprise."

The Socialist movement around the turn of the Century had to fight back, and it did. *Socialist Sunday Schools* were set up for the very young; *Young People's Socialist Leagues* were organized for young workers; neighborhood classes, lectures, debates and lyceums of all kinds were held in hundreds of communities; socialist academies like the *Rand School* were established; and the *Intercollegiate Socialist Society* grew up in universities across the country.

When on December 29, 1906, Frances M. Gill, a New York stenographer, inserted an announcement in the New York *Call* signed "Secretary of the Socialist Sunday School Association," she unknowingly launched a bit of educational history. Miss Gill was a sister-in-law of Daisy Sanial Gill, poet daughter of Lucian Sanial, a Communard who had immigrated to the United States. The announcement was headed "Socialism and the Young," and called on those interested to contact the Secretary. There followed several years of intensive though intermittent organizing of those once-a-week Sunday Schools in large cities throughout the land.



The next notable step was the publication in Girard, Kansas, in 1908, of Nicholas Klein's *The Socialist Primer: First Lessons in Socialism for Children*. On the cover was a drawing of Karl Marx, with his name underneath. The lessons inside were illustrated by the wellknown *Appeal to Reason* cartoonist, Ryan Walker.

This textbook was described as "First Lessons for the Little Ones in Words of One Syllable." First came the alphabet, then drawings with captions: "Rat. O, see the Rat!" "Hog. See the fat hog!" A drawing of a man begging: "Man. Why does the man beg?" Drawing of a Top Hat: "Hat. See the big Hat!"

Pictures teach other words: *Fat, Box, Vote, Free, Slave*. (*Box* is labeled ballot box; *Free* is a man labeled Socialist; *Slave* is a worker with a pick ax.) Later lessons introduce the thought, "Man will not beg," "The box will be full," "The slave will be free." New words are similarly introduced: *Shop, child, house, work, shirk, world, wage*, and so on.

Among the three lessons we may notice Lesson XIX about *chattel slavery*; Lesson XXX about *oil wells*; Lesson XXXII about *Capital and Labor*; Lesson XXXIII about a *Strike*.

The book ends with a short story by Fred D. Warren, *The Boytown Railroad*. It tells how a boy concocted a playtime railroad and allowed other boys to ride on it—if they gave him all they had, or did his chores for him. The yarn ends with the exploited boys rebelling and building their own railroad, leaving the boy capitalist severely alone.

The author of this little text, Nicholas Klein, was a resident of Minnesota, and had been a delegate from that state to the second Socialist Party convention, held in May, 1904, in Chicago. Later that same year he had been one of the American delegates to the Paris Congress of the Second International, where he attracted the attention of an elderly socialist from a competing delegation—Daniel De Leon of the Socialist Labor Party.

The next event in this history was the publication of a periodical for the children of the Socialist Sunday Schools: *The Young Socialists' Magazine*, founded in 1908. A typical front cover design shows three workers of different countries shaking hands over the motto, "Workers of the World, Unite!" The editorial masthead says: "Organ of the American Socialist Sunday Schools."

The contents include articles, stories, and poems, some of them by such well-known socialists as Frances Willard, Ida Crouch Hazlett, Upton Sinclair (an extract from *The Jungle*), and Ella Reeve Bloor. There is a piece about "The Sun and Stars"; a series giving the "History of Our Country for Boys and Girls"; an exposition, "How Paintings Are Made"; an article, "Gravitation and Inertia"; a piece about "The Paris Com-

mune"; short items about John Brown and Abraham Lincoln; a lesson in Esperanto; a "Talk on Evolution"; an editorial, "What Is Patriotism?"; a short article about the fate of the American Indian; cartoons, reproductions of paintings, photos of statues. Then there are, each month, lists of important historical anniversaries, such as the following:

Aug. 3, 1837—Eugene Sue, the great writer, died.

Aug. 5, 1895—Frederick Engels, the mental partner of Karl Marx, passed away.

Aug. 14, 1904—International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam.

Aug. 19, 1819—Death of James Watt, inventor of the steam engine.

Aug. 31, 71 B. C.—Spartacus was killed.

A new period was marked in December, 1911, with the publication in *The Call* of a polemical article by Jeannette D. Pearl (later the wife of Louis C. Fraina, who still later wrote under the pseudonym of Lewis Corey).<sup>1</sup> Miss Pearl opposed those idealists who wished to anticipate the education of a future Socialist society. "Our concern now," she wrote, "is not how we will do things under industrial democracy. What we are concerned with now is how to best educate for the overthrow of a rotten-ripe industrial autocracy."

The second effort at a textbook, or rather guidebook, David S. Greenberg's *Socialist Sunday School Curriculum*, published in 1913, followed to some extent the argument advanced by Miss Pearl. It was designed for teachers, to help them parallel the public school curriculum, enriching while correcting public school courses. Its aims, the Foreword stated, were "the teaching of the essence of Socialist philosophy and theory through the presentation of historical, industrial, economic and social phenomena: and the morality of a progressive society as opposed to the morality of custom."

This course of study covered six years, each year having 30 Sunday morning sessions, divided into four half-hour periods. There were Primary, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced classes, using as texts, in the proper order, the Katherine E. Dopp stories about Cave Men and Lake Dwellers; data about the American Indian (H. R. Schoolcraft's writings); stories about John Ball and Wat Tyler in English History; selected chapters from Morgan's *Ancient Society*; stories from American colonial history; material from Kautsky's *The Class Struggle*, Bulfinch's *Age of Fable*, Marx's *Civil War in France*, James O Neal's *Workers in American History*, and Marx's *Capital*.

Along with this theoretical and historical material were intervals de-

1. "Converting the Children," N.Y. *Call*, Dec. 17, 1911, p. 11, Sunday Magazine Section.

voted to calisthenics, social hygiene, ethics and morals, music and dancing.

This ambitious effort continued into the middle of World War I. From 1912 on, Socialist Sunday Schools existed in New Jersey, Los Angeles, Cleveland, New York, and Rochester. Since then, some aspects of their work have merged into what is known as progressive education, a modicum of which has seeped into the public schools. The teachers in the Socialist Sunday Schools were unpaid volunteers, either public school teachers who were Socialists, or parents who had formerly been teachers. The War put an end to the movement.

One runs across an occasional adult today who attended these schools a generation ago. In Cleveland there was Helen, daughter of Socialist leader Alfred Wagenknecht, and now the wife of Carl Winter, editor of *The Daily World*; and Daniel, son of Socialist leader and eventual Communist Party founder, Charles E. Ruthenberg. In New York, social worker Vita Cuning recalls singing "The People's Flag is Deepest Red"; and newspaperman Erik Bert of the staff of the *Daily World* remembers the statuesque tableaux he took part in to commemorate historic working class events.

Outstanding among the teachers of the Sunday Schools, in addition to Jeannette D. Pearl, Nicholas Klein, and David S. Greenberg, were Fred Briehl, farmer, of upper New York State, and Professor P. Shedd of the University of Rochester. Professor Shedd, according to the *New York Call*, was fired in 1915 after 21 years in the University, at the demand of George Eastman of the Eastman Kodak Company.<sup>2</sup>

The Young People's Socialist League—whose consonantal initials (YPSL) resulted in the slang designation, "Yipsels"—consisted largely of young wage workers. The Marxism they learned could be illustrated from their own experience on the job.

The point was made that "modern industry does not train its juvenile employees but merely works them." Back in the 1890's Mrs. Hannah M. Morgan, wife of the Socialist trade unionist, Thomas H. Morgan, had organized women in the American Federation of Labor to lessen the horrible "sweat shop" conditions under which young people and children were employed. Young working people were not only exploited, often cruelly, but thwarted in development and education. When they united into a Socialist organization of their own, assisted by adult Socialists, they were fighting for themselves as well as for the children they might sometime have. Theirs was truly "the movement of the present," as well as, in a sense, "the future of that movement."

2. *New York Call*, January 11, 1915, p. 4.

The actual crystallizing of the Y.P.S.L. required several years, and the main beginnings were in two cities: New York and Chicago.

The New York beginning was as early as 1905, according to Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*. First there was a Junior Socialist Club, then (1907) a Young Friends Socialistic Literary Circle. By 1911, there were some eight hundred young Socialists "in various clubs throughout the country," but these groupings had no organizational connection with each other.

To provide some sort of unity, the clubs were tied together about October, 1911, in what was then called the Young People's Socialist Federation, with headquarters at 239 East 84th Street, New York. Its organ, *The Young Socialists' Magazine*, was published at 15 Spruce Street. The purpose of the Y.P.S.F., according to the magazine, was to conduct weekly meetings, with lectures and debates on economics, science and literature, followed by music and dancing. "The theories and philosophy of Socialism are discussed at the meetings," it was stated, editorially, "but there is no obligation on the part of a member to believe in Socialism. No matter what your personal beliefs or your race, color or creed may be, you are eligible for membership. . . . All that is required of you is to be sincere, to desire self-culture and to have a whole-hearted interest in the welfare of mankind."

A 4-page folder issued by the Y.P.S.F. was notable since the anti-war cartoon on the cover is by John Sloan, outstanding Socialist artist. The content shows that the Y.P.S.F. aimed mainly to counteract the militaristic Boy Scout movement sponsored by employers and the government. "Going to war should be no business of a civilized people," this leaflet said, three years before World War I.

The Young People's Socialist Federation was midway in its age-group appeal between the Socialist Sunday Schools and the later Young People's Socialist League. The Y.P.S.F. organized high school students rather than young workers. The real beginning of the Young People's Socialist League, as nationally organized and officially recognized in 1913, was in Chicago.

In that city groups of young people began to be constituted into Young People's Socialist Leagues by the State Secretary of the Socialist Party of Illinois, John C. Kennedy, in late 1907, and soon were made into a city-wide association. With it was merged another sizable young people's club called originally the "Workers' School of Government," organized, with the help of John C. Kennedy, by C. N. Madsen, the Socialist representative in the Illinois legislature. As the years went by, many speakers appeared before these Chicago youth groups, including



May Wood Simons, Seymour Stedman, Eugene V. Debs, J. O. Bentall, and other nationally known Socialist leaders.

Meanwhile, in May, 1913, according to Alexander Trachtenberg's *American Labor Year Book, 1916*, William F. Kruse was selected as national organizer of the Young People's Socialist League, and he proceeded to contact "all young Socialist organizations in the country" and to "federate them into a national organization." By 1916, he reported that "there were more than 4,000 members." He added: "The Y.P.S.L. members assist in propaganda and educational work, raise funds, and in general do a great deal to raise the standard of work and comradeship among even the older comrades."

An important point was made by the editor of the *Journal* of the Young People's Socialist League, at the time (May, 1913) when the work of national federation was under way. "A Young People's League," he warned, "is not a children's movement—at least not for children of a tender age. . . . Again, it is not true that a league should be organized exclusively for the propaganda of Socialism among young people. Of course, that is the basic principle upon which we build our organization, but there are other things to be considered. . . . To be a real success a Y.P.S.L. will be a combination of the propaganda, the social, and the educational; and will be controlled and directed by the youth of both sexes ranging from the age of 16 up to 30. . . . Youth demands that its politics be made lively and interesting. Youth craves for excitement, pleasure and recreation: and above all, youth demands that it associate with youth and not with fossils."

It was on the above "Chicago Plan" that the national Y.P.S.L. was founded in 1913 and soon became nation-wide with thousands of members. Hundreds of later Socialists trace the beginnings of their mental development back to the Y.P.S.L.

The International Socialist Society had an auspicious, almost a spectacular, origin in New York on September 12, 1905, and a notable country-wide growth over a period of nearly a dozen years. Its originators sought through this new organization to appeal to college youth, but they did more: they penetrated the American academic world, and reached some of the best faculty minds. The aim, to be sure, was to find out about Marxism, not necessarily to support it; but those who pushed such inquiry were mainly Marxists, and many who came to scoff remained to praise. The I.S.S. was formed, as it announced, "for the purpose of promoting an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women." It was "primarily a study, not a political propaganda organization." Nevertheless, the adjective "Socialist" which formed part of the name was not out of place. Those who set up the Society were Socialists;

those who took part in its advisory leadership were either Socialists or sympathizers; its officers made regular reports to the Socialist Party. Its subject matter was Marxism.

The I.S.S. had three main periods: 1905-1909, the organizational beginning, under Jack London, Upton Sinclair, William English Walling, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and J. G. Phelps Stokes; 1910-12, the start of Harry W. Laidler's secretaryship, marked by Alexander Trachtenberg's student leadership at Yale and Walter Lippmann's at Harvard; and 1913-1916, the war years, marked by the founding of the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, by the rise of new Socialists and sympathizers in college faculties (Scott Nearing at Pennsylvania, Jessie Wallace Hughan at Barnard, Otto C. Marckwardt and Roy W. Sellars at Michigan, Vida D. Scudder at Wellesley), and by new student voices (Freda Kirchwey at Barnard, W. W. Denton at Illinois, Ammon A. Hennacy at Wisconsin, Will Weinstone at the College of the City of New York, Inez Milholland at Vassar, Paul H. Douglas and Randolph Bourne at Columbia.)

The attitude of leading academic thinkers toward Marxism in those years may be indicated by a sort of poll:

*Prof. Richard T. Ely*, Wisconsin: "It may be said, indeed, that nothing in the present day is likely to awaken the conscience of the ordinary man or woman, or to increase the sense of responsibility, as a thorough course in Socialism."

*Prof. Ellen Hayes*, Wellesley: "I frankly declare to you my belief that the Socialist ideal is the one ideal that redeems the human race and justifies its continuance on earth."

*Prof. Charles A. Beard*, historian: "In an age when Socialism is admittedly shaking the old foundations of politics the world over and penetrating our sciences, art and literature, it seems a work of supererogation to attempt to *prove* that men and women presumptively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge should take an intelligent interest in such an important matter."

*Ernest Poole*, novelist: "For you and me in the present life, the city as it is today, the present injustices, the present slums, the present grab for the dollar. For you and me the rough labor of ploughing, of clearing away, of breaking chains, of freeing ourselves from the bonds that enslave us so that our children's freer minds can go on with the mighty work of building."

*Dr. Franklin H. Giddings*, Department of Sociology, Columbia: "If I may venture an opinion as to the most important question in political economy before the American people, it is this: 'Shall the chief and controlling means of production in the United States, including mineral and forest resources, water power sites, railroads and means of communica-

tion, patent rights, and the enormous funds of loanable capital, be owned by a billionaire four hundred, who, by virtue of such ownership, will be able for all practical purposes to own a hundred or more millions of us ordinary human beings; or shall we ordinary human beings, in our collective capacity, own the means of production ourselves and proceed to work out the reality of a democratic republic?"<sup>3</sup>

*The Intercollegiate Socialist*, organ of the I. S. S., was founded in 1913 and displaced the *Bulletin* issued up to then. It was an imposing 24-page magazine published every two months, carrying articles and reviews by a wide variety of writers, thinkers, leaders: Victor Berger, congressman; Florence Kelley, social worker; Arturo Giovannitti, poet; W. J. Ghent, writer and theoretician; Anita Block, women's editor of the *New York Call*; and scores of others. An early article was by Jean Longuet, a son-in-law of Karl Marx, on "The Socialist Movement Among the Students of French Universities." One number bore a Ryan Walker anti-capitalist cartoon on the front cover.

The year 1913 was notable also as the publication year of Jessie Wallace Hughan's *The Facts of Socialism*, a book advertised by John Lane Company as "Especially adapted to college study groups." The I. S. S. "Study Course on Socialism," circulated in 1916, reminds students that Dr. Hughan's book "was written especially for I. S. S. chapters." The book gives a rather good exposition of Marxism. Dr. Hughan had written *American Socialism at the Present Day* two years earlier, and for both works had had the benefit of Louis Boudin's *Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, published in 1909. It was in 1909, too, that Joseph E. Cohen brought out the first edition of his useful manual, *Socialism for Students*, published by the Charles H. Kerr Company. This was a period when Marxist study was widespread.

An editorial reference in the December-January, 1914-1915, issue indicates in a small way the significance of the I.S.S. "John Reed reports," it says, "that when he attempted, a few months ago to obtain from Dr. Karl Liebknecht an interview for publication in a well-known American periodical, the famous German Socialist informed him that the only periodical in this country of whose existence he was aware was that 'little magazine, *The Intercollegiate Socialist*.' "

By 1916 there were Intercollegiate Socialist Society undergraduate chapters in about 70 colleges and universities, and, in addition, alumni chapters in seventeen cities. Field representatives of the Society, such as John Spargo, Rose Pastor Stokes, and Harry W. Laidler, spoke that year at more than 120 colleges, addressing 30,000 students. They talked

3. *The Intercollegiate Socialist*, April 9, 1910.

before some 80 economics and other social science classes, and to more than a score of entire student bodies.

The Socialist movement produced two outstanding educational institutions for the teaching of Marxism and allied subjects: the People's College of Fort Scott, Kansas, and the Rand School of New York.

The story of the People's College might be described as a 13-year effort to realize a great educational dream, which then had an actual but hard-up existence of perhaps five years. It could also be described as the story of a great educator, Walter Thomas Mills, whose place in American working class history surely cannot be denied though few know it. It might also be considered the progenitor of such modern cooperative schools as Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas, and Highlander Folk School, Monteagle, Tennessee—both with a strong heritage of populism and utopianism.

It will be simplest to follow the career of Walter Thomas Mills himself, for wherever he went, the People's College idea went too. Mills published his first important book, *Evolutionary Politics*, in 1898, under the imprint of Charles H. Keer & Company. This was a book of essays about "The Unemployed," "The Children of the Unemployed," "The Problem of the Poor," "Collective and Private Ownership," and so forth—a book with a distinct utopian flavor. In a brief opening chapter, Mills states his central credo: "I am a believer in the greatness of the future."

An important fact emerges casually in the first pages, as though it were a minor trifle: The title page says the copyright is held "by the People's University." And a sort of introduction is given, signed by "George McA. Miller, Chancellor of the People's University," an institution which had been chartered at Hopkins, Illinois, to carry out the "plans proposed by Walter Thomas Mills." That was in 1898, a year when Mills spoke in Hopkins, we are told, for forty-five consecutive Sundays. "Mr. Mills simply advertised to speak, and having spoken once kept speaking. The people having heard him once kept coming."

Two years later, according to *The Comrade*, Vol. I, No. 10, Walter Thomas Mills was in San Francisco, where he had set up the International School for Social Economy, with Frank P. O'Hare as one of the teachers. (O'Hare was later to be the husband of Kate Richards O'Hare and an editor of *The National Rip-Saw*.)

Correspondence courses were given. The Board of Examiners included such leading Socialists as Max D. Hayes, George D. Herron, Charles H. Vail, J. Stitt Wilson, A. M. Simons, and John Spargo.

A year after this, according to an advertisement in an early New York socialist paper, *The Worker*, April 28, 1901, the school had been transferred to Chicago, where the office was at 3962 Langley Avenue (and



shortly afterward moved to 6416 Ellis Avenue). "If you wish to understand Socialism or to be able to work for it, you should take this course of lessons by correspondence," the announcement said, under the heading: "A School for Socialism."

The Chicago school kept going for some years, where Mills lectured more or less regularly, and from where he accepted speaking dates throughout the western and midwestern states.

We hear of Walter Thomas Mills again, however—according to Frederic Cornell, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation—in Kansas City, Missouri, as heading the International School of Social Economy there in 1902, which assertedly already had 1,794 correspondence students.<sup>4</sup>

The next stage came in 1911, in Fort Scott, Kansas, with the establishment of the People's College, a really notable institution. Here, apparently, Mills came only to lecture. The venture was backed by local townsmen and by leading Socialists throughout the country. The story is told by the town's local newspaper, the *Fort Scott Tribune Monitor*, in issues dated August 20, 1911, June 20th, 1914.

The College began in 1911, with a "Socialist Week's Camp" held at Gun Park, featuring speeches and social events every day and evening. The speakers included the local Socialist attorney, Hon. J. I. Sheppard, and the Socialist organizers and journalists, George D. Brewer, Miss May Wood (later Mrs. May Wood Simons), A. M. Simons, H. G. Creel, and the *Appeal to Reason* editor, Fred D. Warren. "People's College Big Thing for Fort Scott," exulted the editor of the *Tribune Monitor*.

After many delays and many months, the People's College was definitely chartered under Kansas state law. In an article in the paper, lawyer Sheppard wrote that Fort Scott would "become, in a few years, the chief center of education in the world." He added: "The school will be owned and directed by the working class of the world."

At long last, the school obtained a suitable site: the \$40,000 former home of a deceased local judge at 1002 National Avenue, in Fort Scott; and on July 1, 1914, headquarters were set up there for classes and for correspondence courses. The first lecture scheduled in the new location was by Eugene V. Debs, the second by Helen Keller. Debs was announced as Chancellor of the People's College.

By December, 1915, the school had its own organ: *The People's College News*, edited by Arthur Le Sueur (father of the writer, Meridel Le Sueur). On its inside front cover were listed Debs as Chancellor, and a Board of Administration which included such other outstanding Socialists as Arthur Le Sueur, Caroline A. Lowe, Fred D. Warren, Charles Edward

Russell, George Allan England, John M. Work (national secretary of the Socialist Party), Charles P. Steinmetz (electrical inventor), Kate Richards O'Hare of the *National Rip-Saw*, and George R. Kirkpatrick (soon-to-be Socialist candidate for vice president). The School's two basic aims were given as follows:

- 1) "To bring education within the reach of every man, woman & child.
- 2) "To teach from the viewpoint of the working class."

The College maintained a farm dairy, an orchard, mechanical and electrical plants and shops, where students could receive both instruction and practical training. The courses included English, arithmetic, book-keeping, penmanship, typing, algebra, American history, parliamentary procedure, and law. A *People's College News* editorial stated that 4,000 students were enrolled, and noted that of the correspondence students, "six are in penitentiaries." Occasional references were made to the *Appeal to Reason*, the *National Rip-Saw*, the *International Socialist Review*, the *Chicago Socialist*, the *Minneapolis Socialist*.

By February, 1916, the People's College sent an official congratulatory message to Socialist congressman Meyer London, Washington, D. C., praising his fight against American involvement in what came to be known as World War I.

It is clear that the People's College had an uphill financial struggle throughout its existence. No millionaire came forward to back its work. It was unable to reach any concord with orthodox established educational institutions. But it left behind a tradition of workers' cultural aspiration that, one hopes, will not completely fade.

The Rand School became a legal entity in 1905, when Carrie Rand (Mrs. E. D. Rand) of Burlington, Iowa, died, leaving a will which provided a fund to establish "a School of Socialism in this country." The money was a trust fund amounting to \$200,000, naming her daughter, Carrie Rand Herron, her son-in-law George D. Herron, and the Socialist lawyer Morris Hillquit as trustees. The full number of trustees was set at nine, who were required to be members of the American Socialist Society (and the members of the American Socialist Society had, in turn, to be members of the Socialist Party of America.) The remaining six trustees were Algernon Lee, who became Director of the School; Job Harriman and Benjamin Hanford, who had both been candidates for vice president; William Mailly, national secretary of the Party; Leonard D. Abbott, an editor of *The Comrade*, socialist magazine of the arts and literature; and Henry Slobodin, first national secretary of the anti-De Leon faction which left the Socialist Labor Party in 1899 to merge with others to form the Socialist Party.

The Rand School became a fact on October 1, 1906, when it opened

4. Frederic Cornell, presently at Columbia University.

its doors to students at 140 East 19th Street, New York City, as announced in *The Worker* of that period. Later it moved to its better-known location at 7 East 15th Street. The trustees named an advisory committee of three: Charles A. Beard of Columbia, Dr. P. A. Levine of the Rockefeller Institute, and Herman Schlueter, editor of the *New-Yorker Volkzeitung*, a German language social-democratic paper which in past years had supported the Socialist Labor Party.

From then on the Socialist and progressive world had a congenial center at the Rand School. In 1912, the *New York Call* announced an addition to the staff: Dr. Helen L. Sumner, a member of the Socialist Party of Washington, D. C., and a former co-worker of Professor John R. Commons.<sup>5</sup> The regular teachers included the Director, Algernon Lee, who taught Socialism; Dr. Alexander Goldenweiser, who taught anthropology; David Berenberg, a former public school teacher; and August Claessens, teacher of public speaking. Concerning the latter, Irving Potash, one of his old students and at present a Communist leader, remembers that Claessens took his pupils straight from the classroom to the soapbox to try out theory in real practice. Among frequent lecturers there were Scott Nearing, Isaac Hourwich, and Morris Hillquit, as well as guest speakers from several college and university faculties.

Trade unions regularly gave selected members scholarships to the Rand School, to make them better organizers. Among other activities, the Rand School Ball became an annual social event.

In 1913, the Rand School Library began to be significant. Collections of books were contributed by Robert Hunter, Dr. Maxim Romm, William Dean Howells, Herman Schlueter, Jessie Ashley, W. J. Ghent. Among those who willed books to the Library were Ben Hanford (a fine collection of pamphlets); Joseph Weiss; and William Mailly. Noted authors contributed copies of their own works, including Jack London, Maxim Gorki, Edward Carpenter, Brand Whitlock, Charles Rann Kennedy, Percy Mackaye, David Graham Phillips, John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett. Later, valuable collections by Eugene V. Debs, Meyer London, and C.H. Matchett (first Socialist candidate for vice president) were bequeathed to the Library.

In 1915, Alexander Trachtenberg came from Yale to establish and take charge of the Research Department, to organize the Library on a systematic basis, and to edit and publish the *American Labor Year Books*, which from then on became an annual Rand School undertaking. Trachtenberg also taught certain courses. In January, 1917, the late Jack Stachel, while still attending Cooper Union, signed up for a course in Labor Problems

under Trachtenberg. (Stachel afterward became a Communist Party leader).

Then came World War I, the Red Scare, searches and seizures. The Rand School eventually closed its doors, but the Rand School Library still lives—known as the Tamiment Library, in the old premises at 7 East 15th Street, under the auspices of its present owner, New York University.

Local and *ad hoc* Marxist discussion groups were a prominent feature of the war and pre-war years, 1913-1917. Forums and debates became popular, in and outside of the Rand School. Morris Hillquit debated the merits of Socialism on the platform with Jacob Gould Schurman in New Rochelle, New York, and H. M. Tichenor, socialist editor of the *Melting Pot*, debated John Basil Barnhill in the columns of the *St. Louis National Rip-Saw*. On street corners, all across the country, in every sizable city, soapboxers like Joseph D. Cannon of the miners' union, taught mass classes in socialism night after night, on a specified topic, regularly announced.

We may take as typical examples of ephemeral but influential Marxist schools, one in Brooklyn, New York, the other in Detroit, Michigan.

In Brooklyn, the Brownsville Labor Lyceum grew up under the backing of local labor unions organized by two Socialists, A. Shiplacoff and Frank Smith. They put in active charge of the Lyceum a man named S. Hurok, who eventually made a world reputation as an impresario. Among the subjects taught in 1915-1916 was American History: the text was James Oneal's *The Workers in American History*, and the teacher was the youthful Will Weinstone (now a Communist teacher and writer) who himself was attending the separately organized lectures on Marxism under Harry Waton. (Waton was independent of the Lyceum; he held his meetings in a separate building in the same neighborhood.) The latter, who seemingly was a man born to teach, instructed a class of 150 young men and women in Karl Marx's *Capital* and Herbert Spencer's *Principles*. Weinstone describes Waton's classes as inspiring and markedly influential. "After he taught us *Capital*," he told the present writer, "I went on and read it myself." Hundreds of young people attended these Waton and Brownsville Lyceum assemblies, took an active part in the discussions, and bought and read the recommended books.

In Detroit there were classes and lectures given by John Keracher, a shoe merchant, and Al Renner, a clerk and accountant, on Marxist themes and classics. Keracher specialized on expositions of *Capital*, especially of value and surplus value, and of historical materialism. He wrote pamphlets on these topics, such as *The Head-Fixers*, an exposé of press-and-church control over ideas. Keracher's friend, Renner, well-read and

5. *New York Call*, December 19, 1912, p. 5.



an able student of public affairs, centered on lecture-demonstrations—backed up by statistics—on the way in which workers were exploited, describing everyday facts of unemployment and of evictions of the poor from their homes, and in general the brutal concrete truths of the class struggle. Margaret Nowak, wife of Stanley Nowak (who became a member of the Michigan legislature), recalls from her youth the irrefutable convincingness of Renner's lectures, delivered with devastating objectivity.

The Keracher-Renner educational work developed soon (1917-1918) into the short-lived though important Proletarian University—but that leads to the outer limits of this study.

War and political reaction halted this many-sided nation-wide intellectual upsurge. Monopoly control of press and radio, buttressed by repressive legislation, changed the pattern of public life, and almost obliterated the memory of this brief hour from people's minds.

The Russian Revolution also—in a sense—interrupted this educational history; or, more accurately, lifted it to a new level of political struggle.

## IX

### *Marxism and American Prose*

"Behold the literature of my Party!" said Jack London on a certain occasion.<sup>1</sup> He was referring to the founding of *The Comrade* in 1901, and the "party" was the Socialist Party, which he had lately joined. Perhaps we should say that by "party" he meant the entire movement initiated by Karl Marx: after all, he had become a member of the earlier Socialist Labor Party in 1895.

In speaking of literature Jack London had in mind also other publications, such as *The International Socialist Review* (1900) and *Wilshire's Magazine* (1900).<sup>2</sup> If we stretch his vision to include prophetically the next dozen years—before 1917—we can include *The Masses*, founded in 1912, *The Bulletin* of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (1905), and an outstanding anthology, *The Cry for Justice*, edited by Upton Sinclair (with Jack London's Foreword) in 1915.

William Dean Howells, already the dean of American literature, hailed the birth of *The Comrade*, even though he wanted a different title for it. He said he didn't "like the name or anything that suggests soldiership." The editors replied that their comradeship was the fraternalism of peace, which they wanted so badly they were "even willing to fight for it." Howells was a socialist sympathizer who contributed financially to socialist political campaigns for office. His greeting to *The Comrade* appeared in the first issue.<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Comrade*, November, 1901, quoted in Jack London, *American Rebel*, edited by Philip S. Foner, p. 55, footnote.

2. H. Gaylord Wilshire, founder and editor.

3. Howell's greeting to *The Comrade* appeared in the issue of October, 1901. See also article, "The Nature of Liberty," by William Dean Howells, in *The Worker*, June 21, p. 4.

From England George Bernard Shaw saluted *The Comrade* in his own Shavian way. He concluded his "good wishes" with the joshing words, "After all, it [a socialist magazine devoted to literature] must succeed *sometime*; and why not this?"<sup>4</sup>

And not only were there periodicals devoted to literature—*socialist* periodicals, demanding a changed world, as they created a new art—but new authors and new novels gave evidence of "the literature of my party."

Even the political propaganda newspapers of the Socialist Party, such as *The New York Call*, *The Appeal to Reason*, *The National Rip-Saw*, and *The Worker*, gave space to poetry and short stories and critical comment. Every week in Anita Block's editorial domain in *The Call* there were verse and book reviews, and established writers did not hesitate to appear there.

But most important was the new generation of outstanding novelists, some of them members of and spokesmen for the Socialist Party.

There were of course Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), and Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1907), as well as his *The People of the Abyss* (1902). Also, there was Ernest Poole, whose *The Harbor* (1915) was notable. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1887) belonged to literature as well as to politics. Floyd Dell was experimenting with social ideas as he sought to theorise on "The Literature of the Machine Age."

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* won deserved fame for two qualities: the uncompromising realism of its description of conditions in the Chicago stockyards, and the congressional investigation which it inspired, leading to the pure food laws of our time. It is interesting, that Ella Reeve Bloor, a Socialist Party organizer, did a good deal of on-the-spot research for Sinclair in gathering material among the stockyard workers.

Jack London's *The Iron Heel* is notable for its astonishing foresight in portraying a fascist government many years ahead of time. The supposed date of publication was set at 32 BOM or Brotherhood of Man, that is, in the new socialist era four hundred years hence. London deduced the rise of a fascist oligarchy from reading W. J. Ghent's *Our Benevolent Feudalism* (except that London regarded it as an utterly brutal—not benevolent—feudalism), and by pondering on the pitiless tsarist crushing of the 1905 revolution in Russia.<sup>5</sup> The heroes of the story are Ernest Everhard and his wife Avis. The central lesson of the book is Marxist.

Ernest Poole's *The Harbor* (1915) was praised and admired as a novel

4. *The Comrade*, October, 1901.

5. Jack London, *American Rebel*, opus cited, pp. 87-88.

about workers in New York. The story is told in the first person by a boy who, at the start, is listening to a sermon by the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher. There are references to Boss Tweed, the Haymarket Victims, strike leaders, suffragettes, and even "mass action." Eventually the terms "comrades" and "socialists" grow out of the narrative. In Socialist Party records at Tamiment Library, Ernest Poole is listed as a candidate for senator from the 17th District in 1914—the year before the book's publication.

William Dean Howells, hovering between Marxism and utopianism, wrote *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894), a utopian piece of fiction and its sequel, *The Eye of the Needle* (1907). These were preceded by *Annie Kilburn* (1891), a novel which indicated the "socialistic" trend of his thinking in those years. Howells may be said to have gone through fictional realism to social idealism. "Howells wished his books to rely on fidelity alone, and through this fidelity to serve as socializing instruments."<sup>6</sup> All three of these are impressive works tusseling with themes that cannot escape class struggle truths, while not quite establishing them.

Edward Bellamy was not a member of any Socialist organization, and his *Looking Backward* came more than a dozen years before the birth of the Socialist Party. Yet it set going a movement called "Nationalism" which had something of a socialist ideology and which merged actively with the Socialist political movement of the time. Many socialists regarded *Looking Backward* as a dependable picture of the society they wanted to establish.

Horace Traubel was a critic and social commentator rather than a novelist. In an article in *The Worker*, April 7, 1906, he wrote: "It is bound to come. The new world of men as against the old world of money." In another piece, October 13, 1906, in *The Worker*, Traubel said: "I know just how you feel about it, Dear Comrade," and urged socialists to keep on going, despite repression. In *The Call*, April 13, 1913, he declared: "I don't know what I am. But I do know what I want. What do I want? I want the earth."

In addition to London, Sinclair, Poole, Bellamy, Howells, and Traubel, the acknowledged leaders among socialist novelists and writers, there are others who deserve attention:

Leroy Scott produced a notable novel of trade-union organization titled *The Walking Delegate* (1905). Buck Foley is the walking delegate, Tom Keating is the foreman, a man named Baxter is head of the

6. *A College Book of American Literature*, Vol. II, p. 455, by Milton Ellis, Louise Pound, George Weida Spohn, 1940.



tyrannical Iron Employers Association, and one Nels Peterson is the scab. The narrative involves a big construction job, and the hero turns out to be Tom Keating.

Eugene Wood's most popular novel was *Back Home* (1905), a book that emphasized humor and plain realism, followed by *Folks Back Home* (1908), and *Our Town* (1913). Eugene Wood was a delegate to the New York State Socialist Constitutional Convention in 1914, as shown by records in the Tamiment Library.<sup>7</sup> In these same records we find a letter from Wood to the organizer, Julius Gerber, dated June 17, 1911, in which Wood offers to speak for the Party. "You can send me wherever you like to fill cavities or appointments where the speaker finds he cannot appear."

I. K. Friedman's novel, *By Bread Alone* (1901), involves a strike in a steel mill owned by Henry Marvin, for which the company mobilizes its pinkertons. There are a thousand pickets. Among the characters are a socialistic student named Blair Carrhart and Henry Marvin's daughter.

Albert Bullard, under the pseudonym of Albert Edwards, was the author of *Comrade Yetta*, a popular novel. Yetta is a socialist leader and delegate to the International Socialist Congress. In *The New Review*, May, 1913, Andre Tridon reviews *Comrade Yetta*, referring to it as "that rare thing, a radical novel which is also a work of art."

George Allan England, a Socialist Party leader, undertook a grandiose novel on *The Air Trust* (1915), with illustrations by socialist artist John Sloan. The book was dedicated to Eugene V. Debs. "This book," says a Foreword by the author, "is the result of an attempt to carry the monopolistic principle to its logical conclusion." If a monopoly can control coal, beef, steel, etc., why not air? The yarn begins with old Isaac Flint, a Wall Street billionaire, who says his power, though great, is not enough. He wants more! There are exciting developments, plots, air tanks, projectiles, airplanes, explosives, and "The Storming of the Works."

Bouck White, the radical preacher who founded The Church of the Social Revolution, also wrote a kind of utopian allegorical novel titled *The Mixing* (1913), designed to demonstrate what cooperation could do. He was a Socialist Party candidate for congress in 1914 from the 13th congressional district of New York.

James Oppenheim wrote *Pay Envelopes* (1911), a volume of short stories that had appeared in *Everybody's*, *Pearson's*, *The Metropolitan*,

7. In *The Call*, April 4, 1915, an article tells of Peggy Wood, actress daughter of socialist author Eugene Wood. Peggy Wood played a leading role in "Hello, Broadway."

about the unemployed, factory women, steel workers, shop-girls. His novel, *The Nine-Tenths* (1911), also dealt with factory workers, with strikes, with the unemployed. Oppenheim was not afraid of "problems" in literature, nor of socialism. He was clearly much interested in the organized working-class movement.

Perhaps the most dramatic instance of a socialist novelist is that of Joseph Medill Patterson, son of the publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, a reactionary Republican paper. This son of wealth was elected to the Illinois legislature as a Republican at the age of twenty-four, then appointed Commissioner of Public Works in Chicago. Then, in 1906, he resigned with the announcement that he was joining the Socialist Party. He wrote *Confessions of a Drone* for *The Independent*, a liberal magazine, the next year. Then, in 1908, he wrote a satiric novel, *A Little Brother of the Rich*, in which he ridicules the wealthy bourgeoisie to which class he belonged. Walter B. Rideout, author of *The Radical Novel in the United States*,<sup>8</sup> says that Patterson "expands his attack on the empty and vicious lives of a leisure class made possible only through the wealth-creating activities of the workers." Rideout goes on to say that in a chapter "describing a yachting cruise, the dissolute pleasures of the rich passengers are contrasted in an ironic counter-point with the labors of the crew."

Oddly enough, Patterson was given the job of editing the 1908 Socialist Campaign Handbook, and it was a good job of editing! But Patterson did not last very long in the Socialist Party. He defected back to the class he came from, even before the Russian Revolution.

Socialist records put the outstanding novelist Sinclair Lewis in Branch One on January 16, 1911. His address is given as Care of Stokes Publishing Company, 443 Fourth Avenue, New York. It is the present writer's opinion that Sinclair Lewis' long-intended "labor novel"—which never got written—had its inspiration decades ago in his brief stay in the Socialist Party.

The evidence given here, incomplete as it admittedly is, should be conclusive on this one point: that Marxist social theories strongly affected American literature in pre-1917 times.

8. Walter B. Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States*, 1956, p. 67.

# X

## *Marxism and American Poetry*

The inspiration that U. S. poets discovered in Marx and in the socialist movement was profound, years before the 1917 revolution in Russia. Combing through the Socialist publications of those years, I have found copious and unmistakable examples.

There is, for example a poem by W. L. Benessi, a frequent contributor to *The Comrade*. It is notable as one of the earliest to embody the Marxist slogan: "You have nothing to lose but your chains: you have a world to gain." Thus in part:

### *The Battle Cry*

(*The Comrade*, November, 1903.)

Close the ranks! Ho, fellow toilers,  
 See! the foe is drawing near—  
 The fell army of despoilers  
 Seeking courage in their fear.  
     Arm'd with falsehood and confusion,  
     See them bungle, hear them howl!  
     Blind with rage and vain delusion,  
     But with purpose drear and foul.  
 See! 'Tis trac'd in glowing letters—  
 Liberty's divine refrain:  
 "Ye can only lose your fetters,  
   But ye have a world to gain."  
     Close the ranks, O fellow toilers,  
     Let each one be brave and true,  
     Let us outvote our despoilers;  
     We are many—They are few.

Sarah N. Cleghorn's *Comrade Jesus*, circa 1912, quoted by William Rose Benet and Norman Cousins in *The Poetry of Freedom*, evokes the rank and file atmosphere of a typical oldtime Socialist Party local. It is clear, too, that Miss Cleghorn was not a bit bothered about politicizing her verse. There is—one senses—an obvious pride in her own *red card*.

### *Comrade Jesus*

Thanks to Saint Matthew, who had been  
 At massmeetings in Palestine,  
 We know whose side was spoken for  
 When Comrade Jesus had the floor.  
     "Where sore they toil and hard they lie,  
     Among the great unwashed, dwell I.—  
     The tramp, the convict, I am he;  
     Cold-shoulder him, cold-shoulder me."  
 By Dives' door, with thoughtful eye,  
 He did tomorrow prophesy:—  
 "The Kingdom's gate is low and small;  
 The rich can scarce wedge through at all."  
     "A dangerous man," said Caiaphas,  
     "An ignorant demagogue, alas!  
     Friend of low women, it is he  
     Slanders the upright Pharisee."  
 For law and order, it was plain,  
 For Holy Church, he must be slain.  
 The troops were there to awe the crowd:  
 Mob violence was not allowed.  
     Ah, let no Local him refuse!  
     Comrade Jesus hath paid his dues.  
     Whatever other be debarred,  
     Comrade Jesus hath his red card.

Professor Jessie Wallace Hughan of Barnard College had a poem entitled "The Vanguard" in the *Bulletin* of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society for October-November, 1912, which also breathes a militant spirit. I cite the first stanza of a four-stanza poem.

### *The Vanguard*

'Tis ours to haste through the desert waste where the hearts of  
 strong men fail;  
 'Tis ours to blaze through hidden ways, when night has swallowed  
 the trail;  
 To charge the height in the first wild fight, when lances meet in the  
 fray;  
 And count the cost by the leaders lost at the end of a losing day.



This theme of the vanguard role of their contemporaries is a favorite one with socialists of the first years of the Twentieth Century.

\* \* \*

"The Eagle That Is Forgotten" by Vachel Lindsay, circa 1902, reprinted in *The Poetry of Freedom*, is a tribute to Governor John P. Altgeld of Illinois, and at the same time, by implication, it is a memorial to the Haymarket Martyrs whom Altgeld defended. This is the final stanza:

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.  
Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.  
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—  
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name.  
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

In 1912, also, Vachel Lindsay wrote a three-stanza bit of verse on the prosaic theme, "Why I Voted the Socialist Ticket." The opening lines state:

I am unjust, but I can strive for justice.  
My life's unkind, but I can vote for kindness.  
I, the unloving, say life should be lovely,  
I, that am blind, cry out against my blindness.

"The Man With the Hoe" by Edwin Markham, written about 1900 after seeing Millet's painting, might be described as a Marxist response to the picture. Its last stanza reads:

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
How will the Future reckon with this man?  
How answer his brute question in that hour  
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?  
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—  
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—  
When this dumb terror shall rise to judge the world,  
After the silence of the centuries?

Another poem by Edwin Markham, in *The Comrade*, is "The Love of Comrades," of which the concluding stanza reads:

O world, rejoice with me,  
For the joy that is to be,  
When far as the bright arch of heaven extends  
The world of men shall be a world of friends.

The slogan of "Workers of the World Unite," emphasized by Benessi,

was a theme for many other poems. The song, "Solidarity Forever," written in 1912 to the tune of "John Brown's Body," by Ralph Chaplin, is an example:

When the Union inspiration through the workers' blood shall run  
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun,  
Yet what force on earth is weaker  
Than the feeble strength of one?  
But the Union makes us strong!

Art Shields tells the story of the writing of "Solidarity Forever" in *The Worker*, September 4, 1966. The occasion was a miners' strike in Cabin Creek, West Virginia, in 1912. Another stanza was added in Chicago during another strike some years later, when unity was again the inspiration.

\* \* \*

In the *New York Call*, June 15, 1913, there was a poem by Louis Untermeyer, "Caliban in the Coal Mines." One of the stanzas reads as follows:

God, if you had but the moon  
Stuck in your cap for a lamp,  
Even you'd tire of it soon  
Down in the dark and the damp.

Significant is "The Angel of Discontent," by Sam Walter Foss, in *The New York Call*, December 28, 1913. The opening lines were these: When the world was formed and the morning stars/Upon their paths were sent/The loftiest-browed of the angels was named/The Angel of Discontent./

"Why I am a Revolutionist," by Covington Hall, is in *Songs of Rebellion*, published by the author in 1915, New Orleans. Covington Hall was an IWW poet and organizer, several of whose volumes of verse are in the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I quote the last three stanzas:

In these wild and frightful moments, I have felt my reason reel,  
Felt an impulse like the tiger's over all my being steal;  
Felt it would not be a murder if my hand the blow could deal,  
That would brand upon your temple the death angel's mark and seal.  
Then I heard a voice crying, "Workers of the world, Unite!"  
And the vanguard of the Marxians broke upon my hopeless sight,  
Serried ranks of Rebels marching 'neath the crimson flag of right,

To call our class to action, to arouse it to its might.  
Thoughts of murder vanished from me and demon ceased to reign,  
For the scheme of life unraveled and the universe seemed sane;  
And I took my place beside them, here upon Truth's battle plain,  
And I stand beside them fighting till the world we lose or gain.

In the *International Socialist Review*, September, 1915, there is a poem by Carl Sandburg about "Billy Sunday". The opening lines are: You come along—tearing your shirt—yelling about Jesus./I want to know what the hell you know about Jesus?

In late 1912 Left-wing Socialists launched a fresh Marxist organ named *The New Review*. In its first issue, January 4, 1913, one of its devoted supporters, Bertha W. Howe, contributed a brief poem in a virtual consecration of the newly-born magazine:

*The New Review*

Soul of the working class  
Which is the life of me—  
Strength of the toiling mass,  
Which speeds the heart of me—  
Stamp thy evolving will,  
Which is the law of me,  
Firm on these pages till  
Earth breathes, 'Equality!'

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, founder and editor of *The Forerunner*, had a poem on "Child Labor" in her December, 1909, issue. Here are two of its nine stanzas:

No fledgling feeds the father-bird!  
No chicken feeds the hen!  
No kitten mouses for the cat—  
This glory is for men.  
We are the Wisest, Strongest Race—  
Loud may our praise be sung—  
The only animal alive  
That feeds upon its young!<sup>1</sup>

The socialist writer, Rose Pastor Stokes, has a beautiful five-stanza poem named "The Slave Driver" in the *International Socialist Review*, August, 1912; the opening:

The brazen loud alarmclock whips my brain.  
Its lash stings the raw thought. I curse, and rise,

1. See another poem by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Socialist and the Suffragette," in VI, "The Battle for Woman Suffrage," herein.

And drag my bleeding thought thru bogs of pain  
To where the gray mills grin as darkness flies.

While in his cell in Essex County Jail, Lawrence, Massachusetts, the IWW poet Arturo Giovanitti wrote his oft-quoted elegy, "The Walker," which appeared in the *International Socialist Review*, September, 1912. Here are some lines from the final stanza:

My brother, do not walk any more.

...

I implore you, my brother, for I am weary of the long vigil, weary  
of counting your steps and heavy with sleep.

Stop, rest, sleep, my brother, for the dawn is well nigh and it is not  
the key alone that can throw open the door.

"The Drum," by Mary Carolyn Davies—a four-stanza anti-war lyric in the *New York Call*, January 10, 1915—says in its second verse:

And he doesn't know the reason for it all—  
But not to go is treason when they call,  
The wild and wicked drum, with its 'Come, come, come!'  
And the sun upon the bayonets, and all.

Well-known is "The Preacher and the Slave," Joe Hill's parody of a Christian hymn which was such a favorite of migratory workers in the I.W.W. It opens with the line, "Long-haired preachers come out every night"; I quote the final stanza:

Workingmen of all countries, unite,  
Side by side we for freedom will fight.  
When the world and its wealth we shall gain  
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:  
You will eat, bye and bye,  
When you've learned how to cook and to fry;  
Chop some wood, 'twill do you good,  
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye.

Clement Wood, whose textbooks on versification have been popular in recent years, wrote a sonnet which was widely circulated at the time of the Colorado coal strike in 1913-1914. No names are mentioned, but the allusions are clearly to the Rockefeller family. The title is "To a Certain Rich Young Ruler"; the first stanza reads:

White-fingered lord of murderous events,  
Well are you guarding what your father gained:  
With torch and rifle you have well maintained  
The lot to which a heavenly providence  
Has called you. Laborers, risen in defense  
Of liberty and life, lie charred and brained



About your mines whose gutted hills are stained  
With slaughter of these newer innocents.

Daisy Sanial Gill, contributed many poems to *Woman's Sphere*, of the *New York Call*, edited by Anita Block, and one was inspired by the same events that spurred Clement Wood to address a sonnet to that "Certain Rich Young Ruler." Her poem was titled, "Down With the Guards," and appeared in the *Call* of May 10, 1914, hailing the 80-odd deserters from Company B of the Colorado National Guard. Here is the opening stanza:

Hail and hope, you-men  
Who straight became new-men  
When ye hissed that mad, black Guard  
That had gunned babes and women,  
The workers' poor women  
With their babes—that dastard Guard!  
Think of Calumet—Homestead!  
Ever the fight for bread  
Ever new-gunned by these Guards;  
Now machine-gunned and roasted,  
Babes—women! gunned—roasted!  
Are we *human*? Down with the Guards!

John G. Neihart's "Cry of the People," included in *The Poetry of Freedom*, surely emphasizes the Class Struggle! For example:

We are the workers and makers!  
We are no longer dumb!  
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!  
Sweeping the earth—we come!  
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,  
Marching into the day!  
*The night is gone and the sword is drawn*  
*And the scabbard is thrown away!*

In July, 1900, Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote a memorial poem in the Debs Scrapbook (Labor Scrapbook No. 5):

Oh, men bowed down with labor!  
Oh, women young, yet old!  
Oh, hearts oppressed in the toilers' breast  
And crushed by the power of gold!  
Keep on with your weary battle  
Against triumphant might.  
No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right.

As World War I was threatening, Eugene Gladstone O'Neill—known

later as Eugene O'Neill, the dramatist—contributed a 19-stanza anti-war poem titled "Fratricide" to *The Call*, May 17, 1914:

What cause could be more asinine  
Than yours, ye slaves of bloody toil?  
Is not your bravery sublime  
Beneath a tropic sun to broil  
And bleed and groan—for Guggenheim!  
And give your lives for—Standard Oil!  
Comrades, awaken to new birth!  
New values on the tables write!  
What is your vaunted courage worth  
Unless you rise up in your might  
And cry: "All workers on the earth  
Are brothers and we WILL NOT FIGHT!"

"The Female of the Species Speaks" was one of the earlier angry retorts by women, appearing in *The National Rip-Saw*, January, 1912. In it Kate Baker Heltzel replies to Kipling's well-known rhyme on "The Female of the Species." She summarizes as follows:

Seems to me, that man would profit  
If he took the thing to heart,  
Let him rule himself by all means,  
And the woman rule her part.  
And we would not, if we knew it,  
Dip our pen in blood or gall,  
But we ask for "abstract justice,"  
For our sisters, that is all.  
Half-truths seem to lull some people,  
More than beasts we are to be,  
When our brothers wiser growing  
Grant to us equality.

Upton Sinclair's lyric, "The Red Flag," which he dedicated to Fred D. Warren, who had been given six months in prison for his protest against the kidnapping of Bill Haywood, appeared in *The Appeal to Reason*, July 17, 1909:

Tremble, oh masters—tremble all who live by others' toil—  
We come your dungeon walls to raze, your palaces to spoil!  
Yours is the power of club and jail, yours is the axe and fire—  
But ours is the hope of human hearts and the strength of the soul's  
desire!  
Ours is the blazing banner, sweeping the sky along!  
Ours the host, the marching host—hark to our battle song!

Chanting of brotherhood, chanting of freedom, dreaming the world to be—

We come in the right of our new-born might to set the people free!

Among other collections of labor and socialist songs, that by Harvey D. Moyer, *Songs of Socialism*, Chicago, 1911, is outstanding.

American labor history has been unusually rich in its production of labor songs, as Foner shows in his *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*. Most of those extant belong to the period of the Workingmen's Party of the United States and the Socialist Labor Party. One of those cited by Foner is the "Eight-Hour Song,"<sup>2</sup> which goes as follows:

We mean to make things over;  
 We're tired of toil for naught  
 But bare enough to live on: never  
 an hour for thought.  
 We want to feel the sunshine; we  
 want to smell the flowers;  
 We're sure that God has willed it,  
 and we mean to have eight hours.  
 We're summoning our forces from  
 shipyard, shop and mill:  
 Eight hours for work, eight hours  
 for rest, eight hours for what we will!

Foner culled this song first from *John Swinton's Paper*, May 16, 1886, where it appeared at the height of the fight for the Eight-hour Day, a fight which Marx personally endorsed. In a letter Professor Foner tells me that the song's author was I. G. Blanchard, and that its first publication was in the *Workingmen's Advocate*, August 18, 1866.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

"The Rip-Saw Mother Goose," No. 14, copyrighted 1912, was an effective assault on tradition by a class-conscious rhymester. They were written by Henry M. Tichenor, and published in a 32-page pamphlet with line-drawings as illustrations in the usual Mother Goose way. Here are some examples:

Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard  
 To get her a weeny wurst;

2. Philip S. Foner, opus cited, Vol. II, p. 103.

3. Professor Foner's letter, dated October 20, 1971, adds: "It was set to music by the Rev. Jesse H. Jones and was published in the *Labor Standard* of July 21, 1876, with the music."

The cupboard was bare—no weeny was there—  
 Morgan had got there first.

. . .

Hey-diddle-diddle the cat and the fiddle,  
 Your daddy has got 'em again;  
 He's votin' to have the wealth he makes  
 Belong to other men.

. . .

Big Biz is in the parlor, counting out his boodle;  
 His wife is in the drawing-room playin' with her poodle;  
 You are workin' like a mule, contented as a clam,  
 And everything is lovely and you don't give-a-dam.

. . .

Pluck me and skin me  
 And lay me down softly,  
 I'm only a workingman made to be skun;  
 I'll vote for you, work for you,  
 Fight for you, die for you,  
 You beautiful capitalist son-of-a-gun.

Besides revising Mother Goose, the infatigable Henry M. Tichenor, himself a debater and editor, also experimented with journalistic verse forms of the type used by "Mr. Dooley" and other humorists. In one such effort he took on the "Men and Religion Forward Movement" which was boosted by J. Pierpont Morgan and other millionaires. This one appeared in the January, 1912, *National Rip-Saw*:

Ho, all ye worn and weary ones in all this blessed land, sing Glory Hallelujah, for Salvation is at hand. Your miseries shall fade away, your troubles all shall hike—Saint Pierpont and his pious bunch are marchin' down the pike. They're comin' with their chloroform and theologic dope and handin' out large packages of holy hot air hope; they'll fill you full of slobberin' hymns and Billy Sunday rot, and teach you how religion means 'contentment with your lot.'

The instances given are only instances, not by any means a complete survey of the Marxist spirit in American verse. They show the creative urge a-borning in the people, and indicate a growing socialist-minded audience in the United States prior to the Bolshevik Revolution.



# XI

## Art: Marxist Political Cartoons in the United States

There is general agreement, I think, that American political cartooning has been outstanding over the years. The satirical treatment of bossism in the cities and of trusts as an influence in government is a fact of journalistic history.

Notable in all this has been cartooning on the left. The socialist artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were particularly good. Ryan Walker, Art Young, Maurice Becker, Rockwell Kent, John Sloan and Robert Minor, to name a few, were powerful in their converging social impact. Donald Drew Egbert, in *Socialism and American Life*, concedes that "Marxism has affected American art to a much greater degree than has utopian socialism."<sup>1</sup>

There was, to be sure, influence from abroad. The British artists, Walter Crane and William Balfour Ker, did a good deal of work for *The Comrade* and other American publications, including the liberal and muckraking journals. But Crane tended to be over-decorative and symbolic, as in his May Day designs; Ker was more vigorous and even violent in his technique, but at the same time his work was over-polished and slick. This is not to deny that Ker was in a way similar to Robert Minor in the vigor of his conception, as shown in his powerful drawing, "From the Depths" (1906).

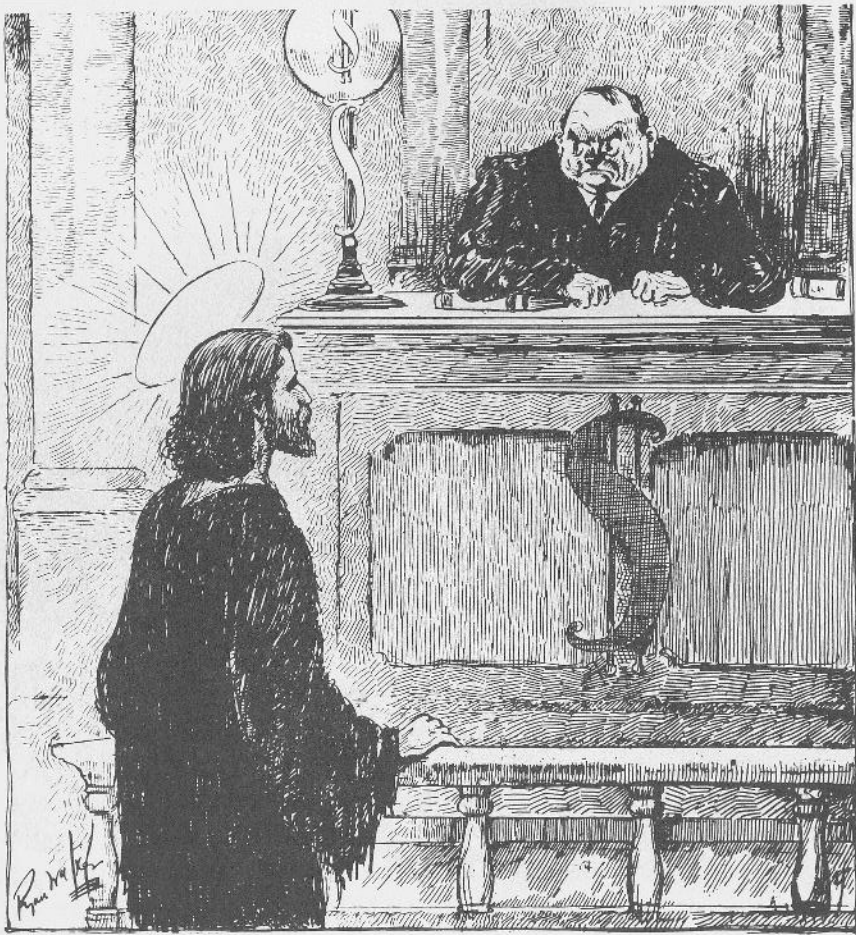
But American socialist artists contemporary with them were more original and inventive, and more devoted than they to the working class. Compare Ryan Walker and Art Young with Ker, for example. Both Walker and Young dealt almost exclusively with the working class, and with class struggle themes. Ryan Walker originated the series featuring



**Capitalism: Boo-hoo! These Socialists are going to take all my property away from me!**

Art Young in *The Red Portfolio* (1912)

1. Donald Drew Egbert, *Socialism and American Life*, page 636.



*What Would His Chances be in a Court of Today*

Ryan Walker in *The Red Portfolio* (1912)

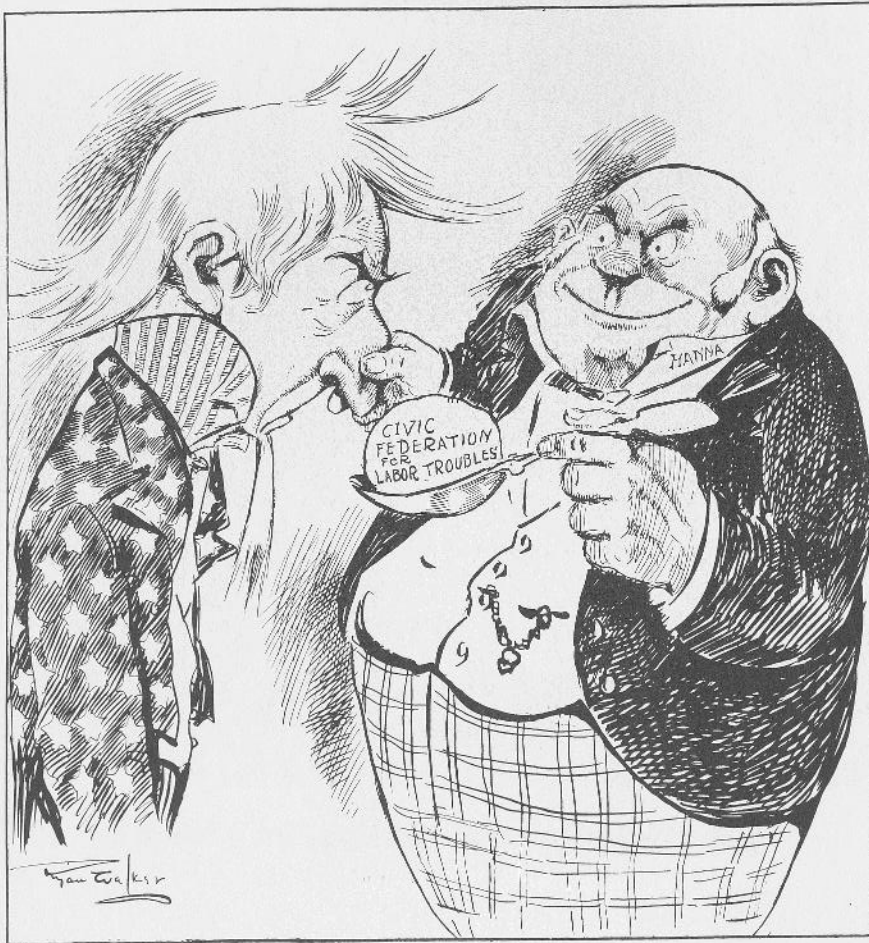


*A Suggestion for the Average Man's Epitaph*

Art Young in *The Red Portfolio* (1912)



# THE COMRADE



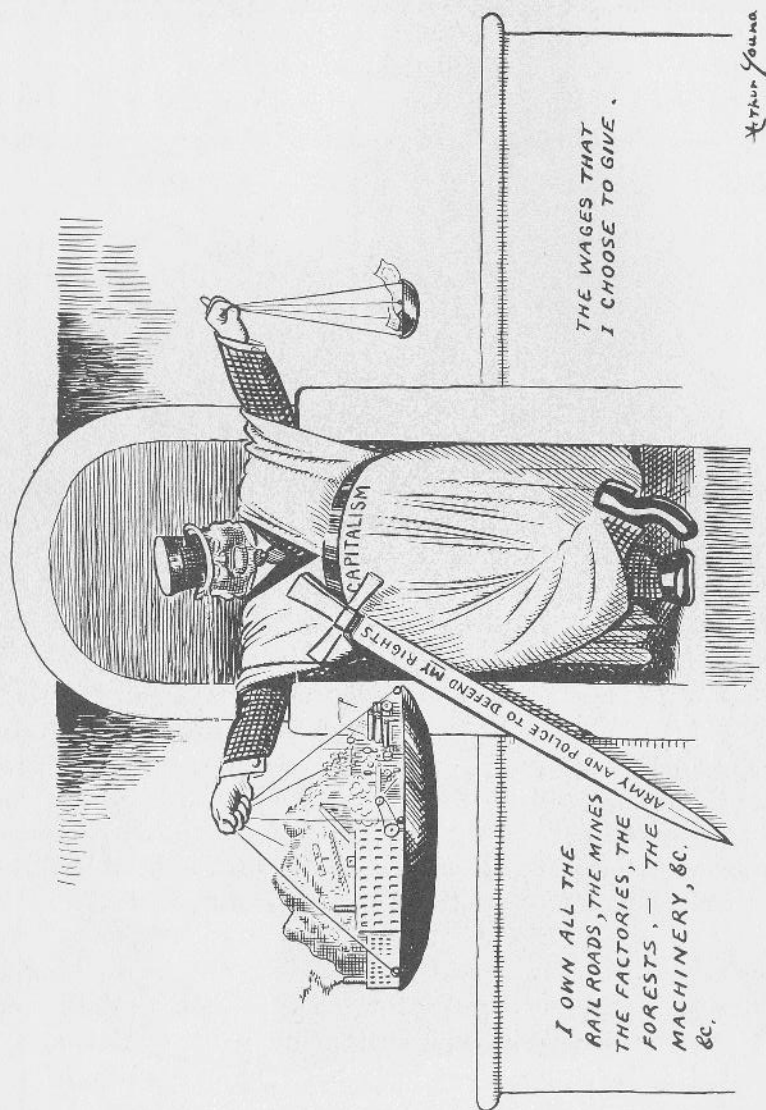
UNCLE SAM: "I've had a good many doses of that stuff already, but it don't cure."

Ryan Walker in *The Comrade* (May, 1903)



The Farmer: "Well, I'll just turn things over with th's spade."

Ryan Walker in *The Red Portfolio* (1912)



The Capitalist's Idea of Perfect Justice

Art Young in *The Red Portfolio* (1912)

"Henry Dubb," the worker who is always foolishly taken in by capitalist propaganda. Art Young was the sardonic creator of "The Poor Fish," another worker who tragically and comically goes through life without seeing how asinine he is in refusing socialism. Additionally, both Ryan Walker and Art Young were magnificent caricaturists.

Ryan Walker was born in Springfield, Kentucky, in 1870, and aside from contributions to *Life* and *Judge*, is known chiefly for his drawings in the *Appeal to Reason* and the *New York Call*, both being socialist newspapers. He is called by B. O. Flower, in the *Arena*, April, 1905, "A Cartoonist of Social Protest." Memorable, furthermore, are the many caricatures of well-known socialist men and women which he drew for the *Call*, notably entire pages in the issues of July 7, 1912, and December 7, 1913.<sup>2</sup>

Maurice Becker, who chummed with Ryan Walker in New York in the days of World War I, was born in 1889 in Novgorod, Russia—also the birthplace of Maxim Gorki—and grew up in the United States. As a conscientious objector, he served a term in Leavenworth Prison. Becker contributed drawings to the socialist press, beginning as early as 1911 in *The Coming Nation*. In a letter to the present writer dated January 24, 1961, Becker describes Ryan Walker thus: "A slight sprightly man, graying abundant hair, once sandy perhaps. Blue twinkling eyes behind glasses. As others of the fraternity, he wore a Windsor tie. A quality of gaiety hovered over him."

Walker and Becker were among the early contributors and founders of the *Masses* (1912), along with Art Young, Rockwell Kent, and John Sloan. The first International Show of Modern Art, known as the Armory Show, was held in New York in 1913, and socialist artists were prominent and influential in it. These Marxist artists worked also for the commercial press. Becker was on the staff of the *New York Tribune* (Karl Marx's old paper), and, later, the *New York World*, as well as the socialist *New York Call*.

John Sloan was basically a painter rather than a cartoonist, but as a conscientious Socialist Party member from 1908 onward, he did cartoons for socialist papers whenever requested to do so. In *John Sloan: A Painter's Life*, Van Wyck Brooks records that "On the Socialist ticket he ran for the Assembly in 1908 and six years later for a judgeship." Sloan, the story continues, "introduced speakers at socialist street meetings—on one occasion in Wall Street at the corner of Broad." He not only drew cartoons for the *Call*, but illustrations for socialist writer Ernest Poole whose stories appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Sloan was abetted,

2. *N. Y. Call*, July 7, p. 7, and December 7, 1913, p. 9.



says Brooks, "by his wife, the tiny, devoted, bellicose, emotional Dolly." She—whose real name was Anna M. Sloan—sold literature at socialist mass meetings, and was generally active in all Jimmie Higgins duties.

Sloan's notable painting, "Backyards: Greenwich Village," executed in 1914, was acquired by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1936. It was perhaps this work that led some cranky critic to say that Sloan belonged to the "ashcan school."

The Socialist Party election records at the Tamiment Library show that on August 24, 1912, the Socialist Party Committee of the 25th Assembly District "was called to order by John Sloan, the Chairman." When nominations were called for member of Assembly, "to be voted for by the enrolled Socialist Party voters at the official Primary to be held on the 17th of September, 1912 . . . John Sloan, residing at 155 East 22nd Street, City of New York, was nominated."

On the "Committee to fill vacancies," the name of "Arthur Young, residing at 9 East 17th Street," was included—the artist known to history as *Art Young*. He was candidate for Assemblyman from the 27th District of New York County in 1913. It is interesting that Art Young became a socialist—as he says in his autobiography, *Art Young: His Life and Times*—when he was "past forty years of age."<sup>3</sup> Like Ryan Walker, he made much of his living by contributing to *Life* and *Judge*.

I never knew Ryan Walker or John Sloan personally, but I did meet Art Young—at least once. It was on the 14th Street corner of Broadway and Union Square, and Young was waving to me from the northeast corner, and actually skipping kitty-corner across toward me, as I stood a few yards from the northwest corner. He introduced himself as Art Young, and said he had a sketch which he had done of Charles E. Ruthenberg at the latter's trial. Somehow or other he knew who I was and knew I was doing a Ruthenberg biography. He was then 86 years old.

Art Young's drawings have in the main been saved. He sketched the Haymarket martyrs in jail in 1886, and never missed a proletarian protest or a working class battle against bosses from that year to 1955, the day I met him.

It took forty years for Art Young to become a conscious Marxist, but the socialism of Rockwell Kent came to him in his early youth. I heard him speak on June 16, 1961, at a tribute in his honor at the Belmont Plaza Hotel, when he declared, "I was a socialist in my teens, and I'm a socialist now." A letter from him to this writer, written from Au Sable, New York, January 21, 1961, says: "I bought a copy of *Das Kapital*

3. *Art Young: His Life and Times*, page 269. Art Young's autobiography was edited by John Nicholas Beffel, 1939.

around 1902, shortly after its publication by Kerr. As with Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, I read but a little way in *Das Kapital* to recognize that here was the truth." He adds that he joined the Socialist Party when he was twenty, and among his friends were Horace Traubel, the associate of Walt Whitman; William English Walling, a prominent Socialist Party leader; and Rufus W. Weeks, a millionaire who called himself a Christian Socialist and who gave financial help to Piet Vlag, the founder of the *Masses*.

"I voted consistently for Debs," Kent declared, in this letter, "from my first vote to Debs' final retirement—which followed, I believe, his candidacy while in prison."<sup>4</sup>

Robert Minor, implacable satirist of two eras, was born in Texas in 1884, and had his share of cartoons in the socialist press of the pre-Bolshevik years, especially in the *Masses*. Although Minor began as an anarchist rather than a socialist, his caustic pencil assailed the Socialist Party's capitalist enemies, and its products found ready space in Left publications. His skill at character portraiture was shown in the commercial press too, as in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* of January 7, 1912, when he caricatured the beef packers on trial.<sup>5</sup>

Thanks to Minor, we also have a splendid drawing of Boardman Robinson, one of the *Masses'* outstanding artists.<sup>6</sup>

At this point there should be noted an art event of historic importance, namely, the publication of the *RED PORTFOLIO*, an anthology of socialist cartoons by socialist artists, selected from *The Appeal to Reason* and *The Coming Nation*, and brought out in Girard, Kansas. The book is undated, but Lee Baxandall's *Marxism and Aesthetics* (Humanities Press, New York, 1968, p. 179), gives the year as 1912, the year Socialist movement reached its highest point, before 1917, measured by the recorded vote of nearly a million for Eugene V. Debs for president.

This collection, as stated in the catalog of the Tamiment Library, includes works by "Ryan Walker, Art Young, Walter Crane, Balfour Ker, and other cartoonists." The Introduction is by Eugene V. Debs, accompanied by a short note by A. M. Simons. This is believed to be the first published compilation of Marxist cartoons in this country. Since 1917 there have, to be sure, been several, notably by *The Toiler* and *The Daily Worker*, but the *Red Portfolio* was the earliest.

*Wilshire's Magazine*, a privately owned socialist publication, featured the cartoons of F. Oppen, which excoriated the trusts in the issue of July, 1902, p. 84. The originals had appeared in the *New York Journal*. In

4. See also, *It's Me, O Lord*, 1960, Rockwell Kent's autobiography.

5. See *Robert Minor: Artist and Crusader*, by Joseph North, 1956, p. 54.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

October, 1902, *Wilshire's* praised Oppen as "A cartoonist of the people," and quoted a signed letter from that artist as saying, "I get your magazine regularly, and value it highly, and like to see my cartoons copied in it." In the same issue an Oppen cartoon from the *New York American* satirized the Trusts, accompanied by a rhymed caption headed, "The Charge of the Trust Brigade."

Oppen illustrated books by Bill Nye, Mark Twain, and Finley P. Dunne, and created such comic characters as Happy Hooligan. One of his Center Shot Leaflets showed "Socialism" as arrows hitting the bull's eye of the target labeled "Capitalism." Another of his anti-Trust drawings has the following caption:

"When will the little fellow quit pulling the capitalist load and begin pushing the Co-operative Commonwealth for himself? It is either pull or push. Take your choice and get busy. . . . Socialism is worth pushing."

Like Oppen, Gordon Nye was also a liberal artist influenced by the socialist philosophy. In *The Call* for Sunday, February 21, 1915, Magazine Section, Gordon Nye has a cartoon showing *The Call* as The Statue of Liberty holding her torch to enlighten the world. The caption says: "Stop giving your support to the press of the enemy. Give your pennies to *your* press. Put your oil in your own lamp to light your own way."

In the Midwest, a lone socialist artist established his own publishing company and art school in Kalamazoo, Michigan. One of his first Center Shot Leaflets bore the slogan, "Workingmen of All Countries, Unite, You have nothing to lose but your chains.—Marx." There is a drawing of a worker and a farmer shaking hands, with a disappointed capitalist scowling in the background. The signature on the drawing is *G. H. Lockwood, 1901*. The accompanying discussion concludes with these words: "The political interests of all workingmen are identical and are represented by the Socialist Party." One of the many issues of Lockwood's magazine carries a letter beginning, "My dear Lockwood" and ending "E. V. Debs." The date is January 18, 1913.<sup>7</sup> Some of the titles of this homespun socialist magazine were as follows: "The Priest and the Billy Goat"; "Pa and Young America"; "The Prophet and the Ass," all illustrated by himself. Lockwood says that he joined the socialist movement in 1897.

To deal briefly with half a dozen socialist cartoonists—including some on the rim of the movement—and not mention the scores of others is perhaps a disservice both to those omitted and to art history. But mere mention is as far as I can go, for my purpose is only to show Marxist influence, not to offer a cyclopaedia of Marx-influenced artists.

7. The Lockwood pamphlets are in the Tamiment Library, New York City, formerly the Rand School Library.

I must, however, add to the previous reference to Boardman Robinson the name of Henry Glintenkamp, a prominent contributor to the *Masses*; and also, finally, the name of Hugo Gellert, who was younger than most of the others, but nonetheless managed to be represented in the *Masses* as early as June, 1916.<sup>8</sup>

The accompanying illustrations show one thing clearly: The power of Marxism, in a situation of social conflict, to bring to fruition an artist's genius.

8. *Masses*, June, 1916, p. 13.



## XII

# Marxism in American Academic and Scientific Thought

The scholar and philosopher, Karl Marx, was a product of European academic culture. Lenin has shown this in pointing out that Marxism grew out of Germany's idealist philosophy (Hegel and his followers), France's Restoration historiography (Thierry, Guizot, and others), and Britain's capitalist economics (Adam Smith, Ricardo, and others). It was early capitalist university study that formed the soil and produced the seed which—through the alchemy of this man's genius—grew into scientific socialist theory.

We should therefore expect that American university culture and American science would likewise produce something in the way of social thought to accompany or confirm Marxism, and exactly that has resulted, though in a limited fashion, in the pre-1917 period that we are examining.

I) First was the notable anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), author of *Ancient Society*, first published in 1877. People may forget that Morgan was president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and that he founded its Anthropology subsection. (See Eleanor Burke Leacock's new edition of *Ancient Society*, with her annotations, 1963, Meridian Books.) Objectively, Morgan was a co-worker of Marx rather than a scientist *influenced by* Marx. Morgan's work became a genuine part of Marxism through Engels' brilliant interpretation of it in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This fact gives United States science a real share in Marxist theory, and our pride in it is pardonable.

II) Among Marx-influenced scholars in this country, let us start with C.

Osborne Ward (1831-1902), author of *The Ancient Lowly*, a two-volume work privately printed by the author in 1888 and re-published by C. H. Kerr & Company in Chicago in 1907. Osborne Ward, like Lewis Henry Morgan, was not a university professor, but carried on his studies unofficially, in the seclusion of his own home. Professionally, he was a newspaper correspondent and editor (Morgan was a lawyer). It must also be remembered that Ward was an American member of the First International, and that he took part in the December 17th, 1871, New York demonstration in honor of the Paris Commune.<sup>1</sup> His work was an immense collection of records and artifacts of ancient times, designed to reveal the basis for the Marxian interpretation of history and the upward progress of mankind. Incidentally, he was an older brother of the well-known sociologist, Lester F. Ward. (See discussion below.)

III) Among scientists, most notable in this connection was Charles Proteus Steinmetz (1865-1923), the "Electrical Wizard" of Rochester, New York, a lifetime socialist and a glory to all other American revolutionists. The *New York Call* of July 26, 1914, carried an illustrated feature piece on Steinmetz. He ran for municipal office as a socialist, was elected, and served. Most significant is the fact that some five years later Steinmetz corresponded with Lenin and offered advice on the latter's project for the electrification of Russia.

IV) Lester F. Ward (1841-1913), younger brother of C. Osborne Ward, was a prominent university sociologist at the turn of the century, and his social criticism often paralleled that of the socialists. "There is no doubt of the 'left wing' quality of the sociologists," wrote Charles Hunt Page, in his *Class and American Sociology: From Ward to Ross* (1940), "if by that is meant their recognition of the significance of class divisions and conflicts in community life." Arthur Morrow Lewis, a prominent speaker on the Socialist Lyceum Bureau, gave entire lectures on Ward's writings with the questionable claim—since Ward was *not* a Marxist—that they demonstrated the truth of socialism. Ward boldly used socialistic phraseology, as for example the sub-title of his famous *Applied Sociology: a Treatise on the Conscious Improvement of Society by Society*, published in 1908. It recalls the earlier and more famous phrase of Engels about humanity's "leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom."<sup>2</sup>

1. See *The First International in America*, by Samuel Bernstein, Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1962.

2. See Frederick Engels' *Anti-Duhring*, International Publishers edition, pp. 311-312. The whole passage (after the "seizure of the means of production by society") is

V) Henry Demarest Lloyd (1847-1903), publicist and economist, was author of an outstanding and indeed historic work, *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894). In it he pilloried great wealth, and exposed its crimes, with documentation. His own research led him toward Marxism, and only his untimely death kept him from carrying out his intention of joining the Socialist Party, as shown by his son-in-law, Harvey O'Connor, in a memorial essay, "Henry Demarest Lloyd: The Prophetic Tradition," an essay in Harvey Goldberg's *American Radicals* (1957). A manuscript found on Lloyd's desk, dated June 4, 1903, was entitled "Why I Join the Socialists."

VI) Gustavus Myers (1872-1964), a socialist himself, was the author of the mammoth *History of Great American Fortunes* (1910), and thereby he supplied the factual ammunition of polemical war to other socialist writers. His work has since been imitated and doubtless improved, and certainly brought up to date, by other researchers, notably Ferdinand Lundberg in his *America's Sixty Families* (1946), and Matthew Josephson in *The Robber Barons* (1934).

VII) Another socialist writer, A. M. Simons (1870-1950), who was for years editor of *The International Socialist Review*, produced *Class Struggles in America*, published by C. H. Kerr & Company, Chicago, in 1903. He revised and enlarged it and brought it out again in 1914 under the new title of *Social Forces in American History*, published this time by Mac-Millan, New York. Simons attempted with some success (and a number of shortcomings) to interpret United States history in Marxist terms.

VIII) Richard T. Ely (1854-1943), a Christian Socialist was fairly knowledgeable about Marx, considering the period in which he wrote. In *Recent American Socialism*, published in the John Hopkins University Studies in 1885, he refers to two parties: the "Socialist Labor Party" and the "International Working People's Association," the latter described as anarchists. [This "International" was an American grouping, not to be confused with the original Marx-led International Workingmen's Association.] Commenting, Ely says: "It may be stated that in general the teachings of Carl (sic) Marx are accepted by both parties [not accurate, of

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as follows: "The objective, external forces which have hitherto dominated history, will then pass under the control of men themselves. It is only from this point that men, with full consciousness, will fashion their own history: it is only from this point that the social causes set in motion by men will have, predominantly and in constantly increasing measure, the effects willed by men. It is humanity's leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom."

course] and his work on capital (*Das Kapital*) is still the bible of the Socialists. This work has not yet been translated into English, although a translation is announced for the near future; but extracts from it have been turned into our tongue and published, and brochures, pamphlets, newspaper and verbal expositions have extended his doctrines, while H. M. Hyndman (1842-1921, British socialist leader) has expounded the views of the great teacher in his *Historical Bases of Socialism* in England."

Herbert Aptheker in his "Marx and American Scholarship", first published in 1954, has provided material relevant to this chapter.\* I shall therefore take the liberty of merging the results of my research with his, quoting from him at times, thereby enriching this discussion.

Dr. Aptheker's essay covers six outstanding figures in the social sciences and their individual attitudes toward Marx and Marxism, as follows: Charles A. Beard (1874-1948); John R. Commons (1862-1945); James Harvey Robinson (1863-1936); E. R. A. Seligman (1861-1939); Albion W. Small (1854-1926); and Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929).

Aptheker comments briefly on the distinguished character of these six scholars: Beard was a foremost historian, Veblen a foremost economist; Small was founder of the *American Journal of Sociology*, and for a long time its editor; Robinson, a professor of history at Columbia University, was a president of the American Historical Association; Commons was a professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin for nearly thirty years; Seligman, a professor of economics at Columbia University for forty-five years, editor of the *Political Science Quarterly*, and a president of the American Economic Association.

"All these great scholars," says Aptheker, "repeatedly referred in their lectures and writings to the ideas of Karl Marx, and—as befitted their stature—did not fail to mention explicitly the name of the man whose ideas they were considering or using. They were not themselves Marxists, but always they dealt with Marx respectfully and with a sense of responsibility. They did not use Marxism as an epithet; rather they treated it as one of the great seminal systems of world thought."

IX) Professor John R. Commons, editor of the many-volumed *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, took part in a discussion of "Social Evolution" in the *International Socialist Review*, April, 1901.<sup>3</sup> While he was critical of the socialist philosophy, he conceded the following: "We may faithfully accept the theory that monopoly is inevitable and perpetual and therefore that freedom will be secured only through

\*Reprinted in *The Era of McCarthyism* (New York, 1960, Humanities Press)

3. *The International Socialist Review*, April, 1901, p. 608.



state ownership and operation." He adds that "the goal will not be reached except by participation of working people in their proportionate share of control over the legislative, administrative and judicial branches of government."

In his *Documentary History* Professor Commons surveyed utopian socialism and labor conditions in 19th century United States with an observant and critical eye, and left very useful records of the social currents he found. On his staff, incidentally, was Helen L. Sumner, an out-and-out Socialist Party member, belonging to a local in Washington, D. C.<sup>4</sup>

Aptheker found that Professor Commons, many years later, climaxed his career by a critique of "Marx Today" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1925. What he said was this: "Karl Marx, the founder of materialistic socialism, is recognized by economists as one of the three or four greatest minds who have contributed to the progress of economic science."

X) E. R. A. Seligman of Columbia University wrote *The Economic Interpretation of History*, first published in 1902. This was his understanding of what Marx called the "Materialist Conception of History." Seligman was following the Socialist Party's use of the phrase, "Economic Determinism," which was a softened form of the original term. Regardless of our estimate of Seligman's exposition, we must note that his estimate of Marx was very high. He asserts that the future historian "will be compelled to assign to Karl Marx a far more prominent place than has hitherto been customary outside of the narrow ranks of the socialists themselves." Continuing, he adds: "Marx will long be remembered as one of those great pioneers who, even if they are not able themselves to reach the goal, nevertheless blaze out a new and promising path in the wilderness of human thought and human progress."<sup>5</sup>

Aptheker notes that later in the same volume, speaking of Marx's philosophy of history, Seligman states: "Whether or not we are prepared to accept it as an adequate explanation of human progress in general, we must all recognize the beneficent influence that it has exerted in stimulating the thoughts of scholars and in broadening the concepts and the ideals of history and economics alike. If for no other reason, it will

4. Helen L. Sumner (Helen L. Sumner Woodbury): Her first book, *The White Slave* (1896), was brought out by the socialist publishing house, C. H. Kerr & Company, Chicago.

5. E. R. A. Seligman, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, 1902, pp. 162-163.

deserve well of future investigators and will occupy an honored place in the record of mental development and scientific progress."

XI) Charles A. Beard, proceeding in the footsteps of Professor Seligman, wrote *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, published in 1913. He refers to President James Madison's well-known comment about the two classes in society—those with and those without property—and the likelihood that a conflict between them would come about in the future.

Said Madison: "The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct classes in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views."

Professor Beard declared this a "masterly statement of the theory of economic determinism"—which, as indicated above, was the softened phrase socialists used at that time as a substitute for Marx's *dialectic materialism*.

Stopping for a moment, we find on page 6 of Beard's book, in a surprising footnote, that "There are three works by socialist writers that deserve study: [A. M.] Simons, *Social Forces in America*, Gustavus Myers' *History of Great American Fortunes* and [his] *History of the Supreme Court*." This afterthought, in the form of a footnote, further attests, as the reader will observe, to socialist influence in Beard's thinking.

Incidentally, the first scholar to call attention to President Madison's axiom about class interests was Daniel De Leon, who eventually became the leader of the Socialist Labor Party. His essay, "The Voice of Madison," appeared in *The Nationalist*, August, 1889, a magazine which supported the views of Edward Bellamy, author of *Looking Backward* (1887). "Madison . . ." wrote De Leon, "was an honest, as well as earnest and profound thinker, peering deep into the future in order to foresee his country's trials and, if possible, smooth her path. Let us then enrich the discussion with the learning of this distinguished Revolutionary Father and give ear to the voice of Madison."

De Leon noted Madison's justified fear that "the class of the propertyless in the United States would increase from generation to generation" and would swell into a great majority. It was thus "a steady progress toward poverty" that Madison foresaw. And he foresaw therewith the

danger of revolt and the need to make government changes to forestall that danger.

Aptheker, in the cited work, pointed out that Beard, after expressing points of disagreement with Marx, added: "Yet I freely pay tribute to the amazing range of Marx's scholarship and the penetrating character of his thought." Beard summed up in our own time as follows: "However much one may dislike Marx's personal views, one cannot deny to him wide and deep knowledge—and a fearless and sacrificial life. He not only interpreted history, as everyone does who writes any history, but he helped to make history. Possibly he may have known something. At least the contemporary student, trying to look coldly and impartially on thought and thinkers in the field of historiography, may learn a little bit at least, from Karl Marx." (*American Historical Review*, October, 1935.)

XII) Professor Albion W. Small was a very earnest student of Marx and of Marxist socialism, gathering intensity as he went on from a modest beginning. In *An Introduction to the Study of Society* by himself and George E. Vincent, published in 1894, this elementary statement is made: "Socialism is nevertheless a challenge which society cannot ignore. If the evils alleged by Socialism do not exist, the charges must be refuted. If they do exist, their cause must be discovered. If actual social evils are due to conditions which society can control, social programmes must be adopted accordingly." While Professor Small headed the department of sociology in the University of Chicago, he published his *General Sociology*, 1905, and *Between Eras: From Capitalism to Democracy*, 1913, progressing gradually to socialistic ideas.

"At Chicago," says Page in the work cited above, "Small conducted seminars on Marxism and class conflict." He also, Page adds, gave a course on "The Conflict of Classes." Small is quoted by both Page and Aptheker as having stated the following: "Marx was one of the few really great thinkers in the history of social science. His reputation thus far has been that of every challenger of tradition. All the conventional, the world over, from the multitude of intellectual nonentities to thinkers whose failure to acknowledge in him more than a peer has seriously impeached their candor, have implicitly conspired to smother his influence by all the means known to obscurantism. From outlawry to averted glances, every device of repression and misrepresentation has been employed against him. . . .

"He is worthy of the most respectful treatment which thinkers can pay to another thinker whose argument has never been successfully answered. . . .

"I confidently predict that in the ultimate judgment of history, Marx

will have a place in social science analogous with that of Galileo in physical science. . . ."

The above is an excerpt from Small's forthright essay, "Socialism in the Light of Social Science," in the *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1912. The theme of the essay was this sentence: "Socialism has been the most wholesome ferment in modern society."

XIII) Thorstein Veblen, author of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, which was first published in 1899 and re-published in 1912, never publicly aligned himself with Marxists, but A. K. Davis, in his essay, "Thorstein Veblen and the Culture of Capitalism," in Goldberg's *American Radicals* cited above, argues, "The core of Veblen's social theory is largely Marxian," and "Veblen's foundation consists of his insistence on change as the prime reality of social life. . . ." Davis also comments: "His terminology is entirely un-Marxian. But the biographical evidence is overwhelming that Veblen became permanently and intensely interested in Marxism early in his career." Finally Davis asks if it is not time "to acknowledge Veblen as a notable and original contributor to Marxian tradition?"

Paul M. Sweezy, in an essay, "The Influence of Marxism on Thorstein Veblen," in *Socialism and American Life* (1952), edited by Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, agrees. Sweezy states that "the weight of evidence indicates that Marxism was one of the decisive factors shaping his thought." Veblen was, Sweezy adds, "a good deal more sympathetic to socialism than he was to the order of society under which he lived."

I quote the following on Veblen from Aptheker's cited essay, "Marx and American Scholarship":

Thorstein Veblen, in a series of articles entitled "The Socialist Economics of Karl Marx and His Followers," felt it necessary to tell the academicians reading the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, that Marx was to be studied with great care and attention, that he was "neither ignorant, imbecile or disingenuous" and that: "There is no system of economic theory more logical than that of Marx" (issues of August 1906 and February 1907). Joseph Dorfman, in his definitive biography of Veblen (Viking Press, 1935), cites Veblen's remark that Marx was "coming to be more widely appreciated as he becomes better understood." To his students, Veblen would often say, Professor Dorfman records, "Read Marx. Uncover the roots of the problem."

XIV) James Harvey Robinson gave what might be called a panegyric on



Marx in his *History*, Columbia University Press, 1908. The following passage from that work is cited by Aptheker:

"It was a philosopher, economist and reformer, not a professional student of history, who suggested a wholly new and wonderful series of questions which the historian might properly ask about the past, and moreover furnished him with a scientific explanation of many matters hitherto ill-understood. I mean Karl Marx."

XV) Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), American scholar, historian and innovator in social studies, has been discussed in this book in another connection, but his stature in all fields requires that he be at least listed in this chapter also. As already noted, he joined the Socialist Party in 1911, and was a critical contributor to Marxist discussion ever since. In his remarkable *Autobiography* (1968), he complains of the absence of reference to Marx in Harvard classrooms, and looking back, he says: "I began to read Karl Marx. I was astounded and wondered what other areas of learning had been roped off from my mind in the days of my 'broad' education." It was a matter of pride to him that, in London, the sculptor Lawrence Bradshaw, who had done "the great head of Karl Marx, did my head." In 1961 he joined the Communist Party.

XVI) Roy Wood Sellars (1880- ) of the University of Michigan had an article in the socialist *New York Call*, May 25, 1913, on the topic, "Incentive to Labor." Professor Sellars—who joined the Department of Philosophy at Ann Arbor in 1905, becoming an assistant professor in 1913—refers to slavery and serfdom, where the incentive was "obvious," then to capitalism. Under capitalism, he points out, the incentive was low wages and high wages, which also was not particularly idealistic. Sellars argues that there may be higher motives, for "man is what he is made by his social and economic conditions." This was the rather diffident beginning of a genuinely honest academician interested in socialism.

Three years later, Sellars published *The Next Step in Democracy* (1916), in which he begins by saying: "I presume that every young man of today who has the capacity to be attracted by the thought of a juster and humaner world than that visible around us has been drawn in some manner toward socialism." In his discussion, Sellars does not ignore Marxism. On the contrary, he puts utopian socialism in the first stage, historically, and Marxism in the second. "Marxian socialism, on the other hand," he writes, "represents just the beginning of reflective analysis." Thus, while he does not *advocate* Marxism, he gives it a place of honor.

Professor Sellars, in effect, endorses Marx's call to workers to unite for victory, "on the true principle that the people must help to emancipate

themselves." Hence, he argues, "In this realistic and democratic attitude rather than in its economic theories lies the permanent contributions which Marxianism [has] made." Sellars endorses socialism's central aim: "Finally," he writes, "socialism hopes to bring in its wake a society healthier physically and morally, and one ever more capable of developing sane and progressive institutions."

In later years, Sellars taught a course labeled "A Critical Examination of Socialism." He called himself personally a Guild Socialist, which took him from socialist politics to a mild form of syndicalism. It is interesting to note that Corliss Lamont, formerly of Columbia, in *The Philosophy of Humanism* (1949), credits Sellars with drawing up the first draft of the Humanist Manifesto of 1933. The Marxist theories he studied in pre-1917 years surely helped to shape his humanist beliefs and ideals.

Sellars' latest book—an autobiography—is entitled *Still Alive* (1968), a title which fits socialism as well as his term of existence.

XVII) Scott Nearing (1883- ), who taught economics at the University of Pennsylvania until he was fired for anti-war teaching and radicalism, was a notable University advocate for socialism. He lectured at the Rand School, wrote pamphlets which the Socialist Party press published, and produced a most important study of monopoly, *Anthracite*, in 1915. He is the best-known academic figure of pre-1917 years who directly and openly supported the Marxist philosophy as taught by the Socialist Party. He has had an enormous influence. His autobiography, *The Making of a Radical* (1972), tells the story of a consistent activist and near-Marxist.

XVIII) Alexander Meiklejohn (1872-1964), a notable educator and scholar-liberal, looking back over a long life, summed up his impression of Marxism in response to an inquiry from the present writer. "I had an early affiliation with the Intercollegiate Socialist Society," he wrote, in a letter dated November 1, 1961, "but was not, as I recall, a member; I read a good deal of the fundamental literature and kept touch with current discussion. Yes, I am sure that the Marxist ideas influenced me, as they did my associates, so that, in attitude, I have regarded myself as a Socialist."<sup>6</sup>

Reflection will show, I think, that the stream of Marxist theory was a seminal and an abiding stimulus to American intellectuals through the last quarter of the 19th century and the first seventeen years of the 20th.

6. Written from the Hotel Adams, New York, where Professor Meiklejohn was staying for a few days, while attending a conference on socialism.

## APPENDIX A

### Platform of the Socialistic Labor Party

(adopted at National Convention, held in Allegheny, Pa., December 26, 1879 through January 1, 1880; published in Detroit, Michigan, April, 1880)

Labor being the creator of all wealth, through and by it alone is organized society and civilization possible. It rightfully follows that those who labor and create all wealth are the most important part of society, and hence should enjoy the full results of their toil; and we declare

That a just and equitable distribution of the fruits of labor is utterly impossible under the present system of society. This fact is abundantly illustrated by the deplorable condition of the working classes, who are in a state of destitution and degrading dependence in the midst of their own productions. While the hardest and most disagreeable work brings to the worker only the bare necessities of life, others, who labor not at all, riot in labor's production and everything that wealth can purchase; and we declare

That the present industrial system of competition causes and intensifies this inequality, concentrating into the hands of a few all means of production, distribution and the results of labor, thus creating gigantic monopolies dangerous to the people's liberties; and we further declare

That these monster monopolies and these extremes of rich and poor are the natural outgrowths of the industrial system, supported by class legislation, and are subversive of all democracy, injurious to the national interests and destructive of all truth and morality. This state of affairs, continued and upheld by the now ruling political parties, is against the welfare of the people, and as the emancipation of the working classes must be achieved by the working classes themselves, it now becomes their duty to unite as a powerful labor party to free themselves from all forms of tyranny and an unjust system.

For these reasons the Socialistic Labor Party has been founded, and in

order to ameliorate the condition of the working people under the present system, we present the following platform and demands:

The material condition of the working people in all civilized countries is identical and results from the same causes, consequently the struggle for the emancipation of labor is international and naturally cooperative and mutual.

The wages system has become destructive of the highest interests of mankind, and to abolish this system, with a view to establish cooperative production and to secure equitable distribution, we demand that the resources of life, the means of production, public transportation and exchange, become as fast as practicable, the public property of the people under administration of the government.

### Demands

First. Entire revision of the United States Constitution so as to institute direct popular legislation, and enable the people to propose or reject any law at their will, and thus secure self-government.

Second. The right of suffrage shall in no wise be abridged.

Third. Political equality before the law, of all citizens, without regard to creed, race or sex.

Fourth. The establishment of a national ministry of labor.

Fifth. All conspiracy laws operating against the rights of workingmen must be repealed.

Sixth. Congress shall provide for the immediate creation of a national bureau of labor statistics.

Seventh. The rigid enforcement of the eight hour law in all national public works. We also demand an amendment to the Constitution of the United States declaring eight hours a legal work day in all industrial employments.

Eighth. All uncultivated lands shall be taxed equally with cultivated lands in the same locality.

Ninth. The government alone shall issue all money, and such right should not be delegated to any banking or private corporation.

*The Socialistic Labor Party struggles to carry out the following measures in those States where they are not now the law:*

First. State bureaux of labor statistics.

Second. Eight hours as a legal working day, and strict punishment of all violators.

Third. Abolition of the system of hiring out by contract the labor of convicts in prisons and reformatory institutions.



Fourth. Strict laws making employers liable for all accidents resulting from their negligence to the injury of their employes.

Fifth. Entire legal restriction of the labor of children under fourteen years of age.

Sixth. Universal compulsory education; all schooling material to be furnished at public expense.

Seventh. Factory, mine and workshop inspection, and sanitary supervision of all food and dwellings.

Eighth. All wages shall be paid in the legal tender of the land, and violations of this law must be punished.

Ninth. All ballots to be printed by town and city governments. Ballots containing the names of all candidates for public office to be sent to all voters two days before each election, and all election days to be legal holidays.

Tenth. All property, whether used for religious or secular purposes, to bear its just proportion of taxation.

#### Resolutions

1st—Resolved, We favor the organization of national and international trade and labor unions for the protection of workingmen, and advise our members to assist and join them, and that in resisting aggressive capital we give to labor, exploited under whatever form, our full sympathy, and, according to our means, our material support.

2nd—Resolved, All so-called tramp laws punishing unemployed workingmen as tramps are unconstitutional and inhuman, as poverty is thereby made a crime, therefore we demand their repeal.

WHEREAS, Twenty-two different railroad corporations have failed to comply with the conditions under which they have received land grants aggregating over 125,000,000 acres, comprising an area of territory larger than nearly a dozen States, and

WHEREAS, Millions of the citizens of the United States are struggling for a bare existence, unable to procure homes and a competence, and

WHEREAS, Said railroad land grants would furnish farms of fifty acres to over five millions of our citizens, therefore be it

RESOLVED, We call upon the Representatives of the people in the Congress of the United States to revoke the charters of these railroad corporations and reclaim the land granted under them for the exclusive use, benefit and occupancy of the people.

WHEREAS, The so-called Democrats (landlords) of the South have joined hands with the so-called Republicans, (capitalists) of the North; and

Whereas, This combination of the wealthy men, both North and South, is made for the sole purpose of destroying the liberties of the common people of both sections of our country; therefore, be it

Resolved, That we urge the working people of the South, regardless of color, to unite with their brothers of the North against the attempts of the ruling class to further impoverish and enslave them by depriving them of the possession and enjoyment of the fruits of their labor.

## APPENDIX B

Platform of the Socialist Party: 1901

(Adopted at a convention held in Indianapolis,  
July 29-31, 1901)

The Socialist Party, in National convention assembled, reaffirms its adherence to the principles of International Socialism, and declares its aim to be the organization of the working class, and those in sympathy with it, into a political party, with the object of conquering the powers of government and using them for the purpose of transforming the present system of private ownership of the means of production and distribution into collective ownership by the entire people.

Formerly the tools of production were simple and owned by the individual worker. To-day the machine, which is an improved and more developed tool of production, is owned by the capitalists and not by the workers. This ownership enables the capitalists to control the product and keep the workers dependent upon them.

Private ownership of the means of production and distribution is responsible for the ever increasing uncertainty of livelihood and poverty and misery of the working class, and it divides society in two hostile classes—the capitalists and wage-workers. The once powerful middle class is rapidly disappearing in the mill of competition. The struggle is now between the capitalist class and the working class. The possession of the means of livelihood gives to the capitalists the control of the government, the press, the pulpit and schools, and enables them to reduce the workingmen to a state of intellectual, physical and social inferiority, political subservience and virtual slavery.

The economic interests of the capitalist class dominate our entire social system; the lives of the working class are recklessly sacrificed for profit, wars are fomented between nations, indiscriminate slaughter is encouraged and the destruction of whole races is sanctioned in order that

the capitalists may extend their commercial dominion abroad and enhance their supremacy at home.

But the same economic causes which developed capitalism are leading to Socialism, which will abolish both the capitalist class and the class of wage-workers. And the active force in bringing about this new and higher order of society is the working class. All other classes, despite their apparent or actual conflicts, are alike interested in the upholding of the system of private ownership of the instruments of wealth production. The Democratic, Republican, the bourgeois Public Ownership parties, and all other parties which do not stand for the complete overthrow of the capitalist system of production, are alike political representatives of the capitalist class.

The workers can most effectively act as a class in their struggle against the collective powers of capitalism, by constituting themselves into a political party, distinct from and opposed to all parties formed by the propertied classes.

While we declare that the development of economic conditions tends to the overthrow of the capitalist system, we recognize that the time and manner of the transition to Socialism also depend upon the stage of development reached by the proletariat. We, therefore, consider it the utmost importance for the Socialist Party to support all active efforts of the working class to better its condition and to elect Socialists to political offices, in order to facilitate the attainment of this end.

As such means we advocate:

1. The public ownership of all means of transportation and communication and all other public utilities as well as of all industries controlled by monopolies, trusts, and combines. No part of the revenue of such industries to be applied to the reduction of taxes on property of the capitalist class, but to be applied wholly to the increase of wages and shortening of the hours of labor of the employees, to the improvement of the service and diminishing the rates to the consumers.
2. The progressive reduction of the hours of labor and the increase of wages in order to decrease the share of the capitalist and increase the share of the worker in the product of labor.
3. State or national insurance of working people in case of accidents, lack of employment, sickness and want in old age; the funds for this purpose to be furnished by the government and to be administered under the control of the working class.
4. The inauguration of a system of public industries, public credit to be used for that purpose in order that the workers be secured the full product of their labor.



5. The education of all children up to the age of eighteen years, and State and municipal aid for books, clothing and food.

6. Equal civil and political rights for men and women.

7. The initiative and referendum, proportional representation and the right of recall of representatives by their constituents.

But in advocating these measures as steps in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth, we warn the working class against the so-called public ownership movements as an attempt of the capitalist class to secure governmental control of public utilities for the purpose of obtaining greater security in the exploitation of other industries and not for the amelioration of the conditions of the working class.

#### Resolution on Socialism and Trade Unionism.

The Socialist Party, in convention assembled, declares:

The trade-union movement and independent political action are the chief emancipating factors of the wage-working class. The trade-union movement is the natural result of capitalist production, and represents the economic side of the working class movement. We consider it the duty of Socialists to join the unions of their respective trades and assist in building up and unifying the trades and labor organizations. We recognize that trades unions are by historical necessity organized on neutral grounds, as far as political affiliation is concerned.

We call the attention of trades-unionists to the fact that the class struggle so nobly waged by the trades-union forces to-day, while it may result in lessening the exploitation of labor, can never abolish that exploitation. The exploitation of labor will only come to an end when society takes possession of all the means of production for the benefit of all the people. It is the duty of every trades-unionist to realize the necessity of independent political action on Socialist lines, to join the Social Democratic Party and assist in building up a strong political movement of the wage-working class, whose ultimate aim and object must be the abolition of wage-slavery and the establishment of a co-operative state of society, based on the collective ownership of all the means of production and distribution.

#### Injunction Resolution.

"Whereas, The injunction has become, in the hands of the judiciary, an instrument by which the capitalist class seeks to destroy the civil and political rights of the workingmen.

"Resolved, That we, the Socialist Party, in convention assembled, call the attention of the working class to the fact that our judiciary is but a servile tool in the hands of the capitalist class and hostile to the interests of labor, and we call upon the working class to use the ballot in defense of their own interests by voting the Socialist ticket."

## APPENDIX C

Panorama of Early Socialist Pioneers  
(From interviews, correspondence, research)

A time-machine that would exhibit the activities of Marxist workers from coast to coast from 1900 through 1916 would provide revelations for historians.

In lieu of such magic, perhaps a literary spotlight focused now here, now there, jumping more or less chronologically from one central spot to another, will provide some illumination.

*1900-1905:* This was the new beginning, the period of rapid *clarification* of Marxist ideas.

**KANSAS:** J. A. Wayland, like Debs, a Bellamy-Populist before he knew of Marx, already had his *Appeal to Reason* in Girard, Kansas, before the turn of the century. . . . With him soon after was Fred D. Warren, the fearless editor. . . . And helping him from the first was Irish-born Mother Jones, who says in her *Autobiography* that she sold subscriptions for the *Appeal* to "almost every lad" at the Federal Barracks in Omaha, and even at the City Hall—"and the paper was launched." Later, in 1906, she and the *Appeal* and Debs defended Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, heroes in an unforgettable labor war. . . . And with the *Appeal*, very soon, were the roving reporter, George H. Shoaf, and the father of American labor cartoonists, Ryan Walker, creator of "Henry Dubb."

**NEW YORK:** Grand old Lucien Sanial, survivor of the Paris Commune, and veteran of the Socialist Labor Party: indeed, author of its best platform, "basing its arguments on the Declaration of Independence" (Hillquit), and now sitting in conventions of the Socialist Party up to as late as 1912. . . . Also, Irish-born Tom Flynn, father of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, engineer and dreamer, voting for Debs in 1900, reading "everything by Marx and Engels he could lay his hands on," attending meetings

with his wife and daughters, and following *The Worker* of that day, the newly established paper of Hillquit, Ben Hanford and Algernon Lee. . . . Unknown to Tom Flynn, the engineer, was the artist, Rockwell Kent, who bought a copy of *Capital* around 1902. . . . Also jeweler and businessman, A. A. Heller, who had joined the Socialist Labor Party in 1893, became a voter for Debs in 1900 and a member of the Socialist Party in 1901. He put his money behind the Rand School and the publishing of Socialist literature. . . . Herman Cahn, who joined the Socialist Party in 1901, was the father of Anita Block, Barnard College graduate, who herself joined the Party in 1907. Later, Herman Cahn wrote *Capital Today* (1915) and daughter Anita Block became editor of the New York *Call's* "Woman's Sphere," featured every Sunday. One of the contributors to her page was Margaret Sanger, who also joined the Party. Anita Block's husband, S. John Block, was a Socialist lawyer. . . . Rose Pastor Stokes, former factory girl, joined the Socialist Party in 1905, and entered upon a scintillating career. Ahead of her in the Party was the former Knights of Labor organizer and suffragist, Leonora O'Reilly. Rose's millionaire husband, J. G. Phelps Stokes, also became a member of the Party.

**OHIO:** Walter M. Nelson, Detroit lawyer, living as a boy at the turn of the century in Columbus, Ohio, writes: "I remember going with my father on Sundays on the street car and then walking a distance to this man's house (an old German friend) where he read *Das Kapital*, translating from German into English." Old man Nelson came out of the Populist tradition, and was working toward socialism. . . .

To Cleveland, Ohio, in 1902, came Russian-born Simon Weissberg fleeing a Siberian prison sentence, and carrying in his pocket his Russian Social Democratic Labor Party membership card. Right away he joined the Socialist Party of America. Became Cleveland representative for Abe Cahan's Jewish *Daily Forward*. Was a presidential elector for Allan L. Benson in 1916. . . . With Simon was Anna, his wife, who also joined the Socialist Party, attending the same branch of which C. E. Ruthenberg and Tom Clifford were members. (She refused to go into a foreign language branch: "In the United States we speak English," she insisted.) She led the Socialist contingent of the Cleveland Woman Suffrage Parade in 1912, and a year later organized the Women's Socialist Educational League to carry on work among housewives. . . . Simon and Anna were the parents of Carl Winter, who at the age of 5 attended Socialist Sunday School with C. E. Ruthenberg's son Daniel. . . . And others there were in Ohio: Tom Clifford (named above), printing leaflets on his little hand press; the Altenbernd family, John Fromholz, dozens of others, who all distributed countless leaflets; and Irish Ammon Hennacy, who feared and fought American entry into World War I.



NEW JERSEY: Ella Reeve Bloor in 1900 was writing articles for the Socialist Labor Party *Weekly People* and in 1902 helping Debs in the Socialist Party, organizing meetings, organizing workers, climbing stairs and caring for her babies, all at the same time, as she tells in her autobiography, *We Are Many*. In the course of her life, for decades after, she did organization work for the Party in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio—in a good many of the states of the Union. (One of her sons, agricultural expert Hal Ware, was praised years afterward by Lenin: "Not a single kind of help has been for us so timely and important as the help shown by you.")

PENNSYLVANIA: Captain John R. McKeown, born in Pennsylvania in 1877, was a member of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin workers from 1894 till CIO days, a veteran of the Spanish-American War of 1898, and a voter for Debs in 1900. Was for a time organizer of the Socialist Party in his home state. . . . Horace Traubel, literary executor of Walt Whitman, friend of Debs, and himself an unaffiliated socialist sympathizer, editing a little paper called *The Conservator* from 1890 to World War I. Like Henry Demarest Lloyd, like William Dean Howells, he could accept just about everything in Marx—but hesitated at class struggle. . . . One summer night in 1900, at the corner of Broad and South Streets in Philadelphia, 19-year-old William Z. Foster stood listening to a Socialist Labor Party soap-boxer for above an hour, and walked off with some pamphlets in his pocket. A year later he joined the newly formed Socialist Party. . . . Steam-fitter James H. Maurer, who had joined the Knights of Labor in 1880 and the Socialist Labor Party in 1889, also joined the Socialist Party in 1902, and was elected to the state legislature on the Socialist ticket in 1911.

ILLINOIS: From Chicago in 1904 went Mrs. Corinne Brown, suffragette and Socialist, to Amsterdam as a delegate from the Socialist Party of America to the Congress of the Second International. There, in that Marx-inspired parliament, she listened, consulted, argued, and voted, along with other delegates from around the world. . . . Socialist historian A. M. Simons, at first editor of the *Coming Nation* and, later on, editor of the *International Socialist Review*, found himself in June, 1905, translating an article by Karl Kautsky that mentioned a man named Lenin. The article was about the two factions in the Russian Social Democratic Party. This is what Kautsky had written: "One of these [factions] is the *Iskra* (Spark) among whose contributors are many who are well-known to the German comrades, especially Axelrod, Deutsch, Plechanoff, and Vera Sassulitsch. The other is *Wperjod* (Forward) whose most prominent representative is Lenin." . . . A couple of years later, also in the *Inter-*

*national Socialist Review* (July, 1907) was an article by William English Walling on "Evolution of Socialism in Russia." Walling discusses (rather vaguely) the possible role of the peasantry in the hoped for Russian revolution, and indicates that Lenin, leader of the "majority faction" of the Social Democrats, favored a more positive role on the part of the peasants than did the "minority faction." Walling adds: "Lenin thinks that Germany would not allow Socialism in Russia and would try to intervene." . . . Here in Chicago was Charles H. Kerr, scholarly publisher of Marxist books, taking time off in 1901 to compile *Socialist Songs with Music*, and even translating "The International Party" from the French of Eugene Poitier. "We American Socialists are only beginning to sing," he wrote in a preface to the first edition. . . . And in Chicago, too, was Henry Demarest Lloyd, discussing by mail with William Dean Howells his feeling that he should join the Socialist Party; and Arthur Morrow Lewis and Lena Morrow Lewis, both popular lecturers on Marxism, and salesmen of Socialist classics.

WASHINGTON: Westward in 1898 traveled pioneer Methodist preacher Ely C. Johnson to the town of Puyallup, Washington, and there saw copies of J. A. Wayland's *Appeal to Reason*. Then he read *Wage-Labor and Capital* and other books by Marx and Engels, and threw away his bible. Instead of sermons, he gave lectures on socialism, and organized Socialist locals from 1900 on. . . . Johnson's daughter Mattie joined the Socialist Party in 1908; Mattie's son Elmer T. Allison became editor of the *Ohio Socialist* years later; Mattie's daughter Hortense Allison joined the Socialist Party in Seattle in 1905 at the age of 18, got into the Seattle free speech fight in 1907-08, and was a member of the Socialist National Woman's Committee in 1912. . . . Westward too traveled German-born Alfred Wagenknecht and became state organizer of the Socialist Party of Washington from 1900 to the Russian Revolution. Married Hortense Allison, and they moved to Ohio. The Wagenknechts were friends of the Ruthenbergs (Charles E. and Rose), and both families became friends of Bishop William Montgomery Brown of Galion, Ohio. Bishop Brown joined the Socialist Party and brought in 30 new members. . . . A daughter of the Wagenknechts became Helen Winter, Communist leader and wife of Carl Winter (now an editor of the *Daily World*). . . . But can we forget those others in Washington State: Dr. Herman F. Titus, editor of the *Seattle Socialist*, and teacher of Marxism? And his many students, including Sam and Kate Sadler, he an organizer, she a famed orator?

MISSOURI: Kate Richards O'Hare—in the Socialist Labor Party in 1889 and the Socialist Party in 1900—became associate editor of the *National Rip-Saw* ("Blind as a bat to everything but right"). Lectured

widely in many states, including once in Brooklyn—wearing, as some still remember, a flaming red dress. Her husband was Frank P. O'Hare, teacher and editor.

COLORADO: Mrs. Ida Crouch-Hazlett, one-time member of the Knights of Labor, lecturer and organizer for the Socialist Party from 1901 on, was in 1902 candidate for Congress from Colorado, "first woman parliamentary candidate in the world" (*American Labor Who's Who*, 1925).

CALIFORNIA: Albert Strout, born in Yuba City, California, in 1876—the year that saw the birth of the first American Marxist party—joined the Socialist Labor Party in 1898, and in 1899 the Social Democratic Party which was to unite with the Hillquit group to form the Socialist Party. While the soon-to-merge groups were quarreling over a name for the new party, Strout wrote a piece for the *Workers' Call* urging the name "Socialist Party"—and the idea took hold. Strout is important for one further contribution: In 1901 the repercussions of the Boxer Rebellion and the Chinese Exclusion Act were at a high pitch, and he openly took the position that "a Chinese was a human being and if he did his share of the world's work, he was entitled to receive the welcome hand of brotherhood." . . . Gaylord Wilshire, a Fabian Socialist who moved close to Marxism, founded *Wilshire's Monthly* in 1900, and ran for Congress in 1902 on the Socialist ticket. In an editorial reprinted in 1906, he wrote: "One who cannot see the necessity of a class struggle preceding the institution of Socialism has a very poor idea of the Marxian position, and in fact, he must be going through the world of today with closed eyes and ears."

1906-1912: This was the period of most rapid spread of Marxist ideas:

SOUTH DAKOTA: "I remember that Tom Ayres, my father, had the three volumes of *Capital* in the book case," says a letter from Homer Ayres, contributor to Helen Alfred's *Towards a Socialist America*. Tom Ayres and his wife, who lived then in Pierre, South Dakota, talked about Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, his son Homer also recalls, and adds that the "rural radicals" round about all subscribed to the *Appeal to Reason* and the *National Rip-Saw*. . . . Farmer D. I. Todd got interested in socialism in 1909, he said in a letter to this writer. That winter, he states, his wife, three hired men, and himself "joined in a winter's study of Walter Thomas Mill's *The Struggle for Existence*. Then, says Todd, he went on to read "everything in English that Marx and Engels ever wrote." Joined the Socialist Party in 1911, sold subscriptions to the *Appeal to Reason*, the *Milwaukee Leader*, the *New York Call*, and North Dakota's own Socialist paper, the *Iconoclast*. Then helped get fellow farmer Carl

Erickson elected sheriff of Williams County on the Socialist ticket in 1912.

MICHIGAN: Before he got to Chicago, where he got his start as a Socialist journalist, Reuben Borough writes, he attended high school in Marshall, Michigan, and there he heard about Marx from two sources. One was Ben Blumberg, a cigar-maker (later secretary of the Socialist Party of Michigan), and the other was the rector of the local Episcopal Church. In Chicago, where Reuben Borough went next, he became a reporter (1907) on the *Chicago Daily Socialist*. . . . Delbert E. Earley, itinerant Socialist soap-boxer, was a familiar figure in most Michigan towns from 1912 on, a candidate for state office many times, a peddler of Socialist classics, and a teacher of Socialism.

MONTANA: "I joined the Socialist Party in 1907 in a little town in Montana, where I worked as a stone mason," writes Andrew Omholt. He tells how 3,000 people met in 1913 in Williston, Williams County, with Walter Thomas Mills as chairman and Eugene V. Debs as featured speaker. At other times Kate Richards O'Hare spoke there, and also Emil Seidel of Milwaukee, and Carl D. Thompson of the Party's national office.

CALIFORNIA: John J. Ballam, London-born cigar-maker and Socialist soap-boxer, made his mark in Oakland, California, in the years 1903-1911, wrote Steve Murdock of the *People's World*. Ballam spoke every night on street corners, studied at the University, was active in the Cigar Makers' Union, and wrote for the *Oakland World*, socialist newspaper. He got to know Jack London, California's favorite son, and Thorstein Veblen, an academic dissident. . . . In California, too, was another pioneer Socialist soap-boxer, Tom Lewis, whose name is still legend as speaker, debater, and organizer. . . . "My first reading of Socialist literature was Engels' *Socialism; Utopian and Scientific*," writes newsman and author, James Dolsen, and adds that he joined the Socialist Party in California in 1907. (It was years later that Dolsen wrote *The Awakening of China*, one of the first books on socialism in that new-ancient land.)

NORTH CAROLINA: W. G. Binkley, Southern farmer, descendant of a Swiss settler who came to America in 1749, recalls reading his first copy of the *Appeal to Reason* when he was eleven, an issue reporting the trial and speech of Fred D. Warren. Binkley listened to Gene Debs speak in Winston-Salem in 1911, and joined the Socialist Party in 1912. Later he heard Emil Seidel, Ida Crouch-Hazlett, Kate Richards O'Hare and Ryan Walker in that same city. "In 1916," he writes, "we polled 28 Socialist votes out of a total of 200 in my own precinct." He adds that "all the Binkleys supported the North during the Civil War, and hated the rich slave-owning class." . . . Another North Carolina farmer, Virgil Wilson,



according to Binkley, was Populist candidate for governor in 1898, and joined the Socialist Party a few years later. . . . Schoolmaster Charles J. Hendley, son of a railroad worker, was a Socialist in his native North Carolina as early as 1912. He came north to a long career of school teaching and union activities in New York.

NEW JERSEY: Bryn Mawr-trained Anna Rochester read Marx's *Capital* in 1908 and voted for Debs that same year. She joined the Socialist Party in New Jersey in 1910. For the next two years she worked with Florence Kelley of the National Consumers League in the campaign to reduce the hours of labor for women workers; then was research worker for the National Child Labor Committee; next, more research for the Federal Children's Bureau in Washington. And so on in a devoted life.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Farmer Fred B. Chase and his wife Elba were friends and supporters of Eugene V. Debs in 1912. (They were the parents of Homer Chase.)

WASHINGTON: E. B. Ault grew up in an old Socialist "Equality Colony," near the town of Edison, Washington, a utopian settlement that his parents had joined before the turn of the century. Ault went from utopian to scientific socialism, becoming publicity man for Debs in the earlier campaigns. In 1912, Ault became editor of the *Seattle Union Record*.

ALASKA: Up there in Nome, Alaska, from 1907 to the Russian Revolution, the Nome *Industrial Worker* was the *only* newspaper published. It was the organ of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and its editor (says journalist Art Shields of *The Worker*, who lived there a while) was the erudite John McGibney, who read and interpreted Marx in a somewhat leftist fashion.

KANSAS: German-born Ludwig E. Katterfeld, living in Topeka, first sold one thousand subscriptions to the *Appeal to Reason*, and then joined the Socialist Party in 1905. He was a Kansas delegate to the 1908 national convention and rode that year with Debs on the "Red Special". A leaflet he wrote at that time was entitled "Plenty for All." . . . In nearby Wichita lived Populist-reared Earl Browder, who joined the Socialist Party in 1907—and left in 1912 to do trade union work.

NEW YORK: In 1908 Cyril Lambkin was a member of the Young People's Socialist League. "One of the proudest moments of my young life," he writes, "was my acting as an usher at the Hippodrome in New York to celebrate the first issue of the New York *Call*, with Gene Debs as the main speaker." A few years later, in Detroit, Michigan, he joined the Socialist Party. Here he became acquainted with suffragette Frances Allaire, a descendant of one of the original French settlers in the Detroit area. She too became a Socialist, and supplied bail to war-time victims of

reaction. . . . Office worker Bertha C. Howe was handed a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* by Courtenay Lemmon, one of the old Socialist intelligentsia, around 1905, and gradually grew into Socialism from then on. Until her death at age 102, she kept the delegate's badge she wore at a New York state convention of the Socialist Party in 1912. . . . In this same year Negro soapboxer Hubert H. Harrison was also at the state convention, along with Lucien Sanial and Charles H. Matchett. . . . It was a year earlier that W. E. B. Du Bois joined the Socialist Party—and resigned in 1912, explaining his reasons for doing so. . . . According to Socialist Party records at Tamiment Library (the old Rand School Library) Benjamin Gitlow was a member of Local New York around 1909, along with artist John Sloan and other well-known people. Gitlow helped organize the Retail Clerks' Union. His mother was a devoted and class-conscious Socialist. (No one thought, then, that he would one day write a book entitled *I Confess*.)

OHIO: Jacob S. Coxey, who had led "Coxey's Army" of unemployed to Washington, D. C., in the panic of 1894, joined the Socialist Party in Massillon, Ohio, about 1912. In Ohio's Socialist circles he met Charles E. Ruthenberg, candidate for governor (Ruthenberg had himself joined in 1909), and Mrs. Marguerite Prevey, veteran Socialist woman leader.

MINNESOTA: Catholic-reared Clara Strong Broms, a school teacher and outstanding woman leftwinger of Minnesota, joined the Socialist Party about 1910. She remembers (in a letter to this writer) meeting Rose Pastor Stokes, William Bross Lloyd (son of Henry Demarest Lloyd), Alfred Wagenknecht, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and John Reed. . . . Minnesota-born J. Louis Engdahl, long-time editor of Socialist papers, headed the staff of the *Chicago Daily Socialist* about 1907, then was labor editor of the *Milwaukee Leader*, then editor of the *American Socialist* (1914). Many Socialist newsmen served their apprenticeship under Engdahl.

ILLINOIS: Italian-born Frank A. Pellegrini, member of the Sewer and Tunnel Workers Union, supported the newspaper strike of 1912, read the *Chicago Daily Socialist*, heard Debs speak at the Armory on Washington Boulevard, and joined the Socialist Party that same year.

1913-1916: This was the period of *testing* of American Marxists.

NEW YORK: Ryan Walker was no longer alone among cartoonists, for now along came John Sloan and Maurice Becker, (Becker was soon to join hundreds of anti-war militants at Fort Leavenworth prison.) Another of the newer artists was Art Young, creator of the Poor Fish. . . . Teen-aged Horace B. Davis at an Intercollegiate Socialist Society meeting listened to a speech by Professor Scott Nearing in 1916. . . . Farmer Fred Briehl joined the Socialist Party in 1913, and recalls that his father, Herman Briehl, also read Socialist literature. A few years later Fred found

himself in prison—at Fort Douglas, Utah, along with thirty other openly self-announced Socialist objectors to war. . . . From Russia in 1915, came M. J. Olgin, already a distinguished scholar and a devoted Socialist over there, to start a new scholarly and Socialist life here in America. . . . A. Philip Randolph, Negro intellectual inspired by W. E. B. Du Bois, joined the Socialist movement and prepared to launch that remarkable magazine, *The Messenger*, in January, 1917. . . . Pacifist A. J. Muste tells in his autobiography, *Not So Long Ago*, how attracted he was to Woodrow Wilson's he-kept-us-out-of-war slogan in 1916, but adds: "By the time Election Day came, however, I voted for Eugene V. Debs." . . . Dorothy Day, who later became a Catholic pacifist, worked as a reporter on the New York *Call* in 1916, and supported the radical left.

CALIFORNIA: Trade unionist and Socialist Party member Thomas J. Mooney was also anti-war in San Francisco, and imperialist reaction struck murderously at him in 1916. . . . Agnes Smedley joined the Party in college circles about 1915, and says of the 1916 election, "At the time I had been a Socialist, at least on paper, and had been one of the many Socialists who deserted the Party and voted for Wilson purely because of his anti-war slogan." . . . And also in California was J. E. Snyder, editor of the *Oakland World* from 1915 on through the war. He was well-known before that for his Socialist barnstorming through Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska.

WASHINGTON: Teen-aged Harvey O'Connor joined the Young People's Socialist League and then the Socialist Party in Seattle around 1915, and wrote for the Socialist press there. He recalls Kate Sadler Greenhalgh of Seattle, "where she was kind of a Rosa Luxembourg of the Socialist movement, a fire-brand with a glowing personality and tremendous appeal to mass audiences." O'Connor adds: "It would be presumptuous for me to claim to be a Marxist, in view of my ignorance of his doctrine. However, in the course of reading I have found no other explanations of world affairs which seem to make as much sense as those based on Marxism." . . . Another teen-ager in Seattle, Joe Pass, joined the Young People's Socialist League there about the same time, and then the Socialist Party. He remembers vividly speeches by Gene Debs, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Arthur Morrow Lewis, Bill Haywood, Tom Lewis, Walter Thomas Mills. Joe's brother, Maurice Pass, became a socialist artist, joining Maurice Becker and others in the ranks of artists.

WEST VIRGINIA: Val Reuther, according to Carl Haessler of *Federated Press*, was an organizer for the American Federation of Labor Brewery Workers Union in the years before World War I, and became a militant Socialist Party member. His sons, Walter and Victor, were born

in Wheeling, West Virginia, where Val founded and headed the city central labor body.

ILLINOIS: Holland Roberts was a high school boy of 17 or so when he first tried in 1912-13 to read *Capital* in Peoria, Illinois. "Of course I could not understand a great deal of what I read, but nevertheless enough of it sank in to impress me deeply," he writes. . . . Independent newsman Carl Haessler was a Rhodes Scholar in 1911-12 and joined the Fabians at Oxford, England. When he returned to the United States, he joined the Socialist Party in 1914, while at the University of Urbana, and worked with Scott Nearing, Rose Pastor Stokes, George R. Kirkpatrick and others "to stave off United States participation in World War I." Haessler knew personally many Socialist old-timers: Ralph Korngold, organizer; Victor Berger, congressman and editor; John M. Work, national secretary; Oscar Ameringer, lecturer and propagandist; and scores of others.

MICHIGAN: Attorney Maurice Sugar joined the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1912 at the University of Michigan law School and the Socialist Party the following year. Like other Socialist students at Ann Arbor, he made himself available as a speaker on Marxism for the nearby local Socialist clubs.

MASSACHUSETTS: Congregational minister Albert Rhys Williams in Massachusetts joined the Socialist Party in 1914-15, and, in his church in East Boston, set up a Socialist Forum for public discussion of solutions to social questions.

CONNECTICUT: Alabama-born Helen Keller lived much of her adult life in Westport, Connecticut. She surprised many by writing an article, "How I Became a Socialist," for the New York *Call*, November 3, 1912, an article which was reprinted in 1920 in her book, *Out of the Dark*. Referring to it she says, in the book's preface, "Briefly, it sums up my position at the present time." First, she says, she read H. G. Wells' *New Worlds for Old*, then went on to articles in the *International Socialist Review*, the *Appeal to Reason*, and Kautsky on the *Erfurt Programme*. She wrote a letter of support to Fred Warren when he was on trial, and declared that she had a red flag hanging in her study. She was ironic about capitalist editorial references to her blindness in connection with social beliefs. "Marx was probably stone deaf and William Morris was blind," she wrote, indignantly, and went on: "It is not fair fighting or good argument to remind me and others that I cannot see or hear. I can read. I can read all the Socialist books I have time for, in English, German, and French."

Only a relatively few people are mentioned here: the literary spotlight has slid over the majority. There were many others: truly, thousands.



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*Author's Commentary:*

**AN EPILOGUE**

How did the Marx-influenced people described here react to the actual Revolution when it came in 1917?

The truth is that even *before* 1917 there was a division within the Socialist ranks: the Left Wing and the Right Wing. The dividing line was between those who wanted a "Workers' Government" which would run the nation's affairs in the interest of workers, and those who wanted a mixed collaboration of "business unionism" and businessmen.

The American Left welcomed Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution and supported both in the years following; the Right rejected them and became leaders of the counter-revolution.

George Creel, once a reporter on the *Appeal to Reason*, became a war propagandist for President Woodrow Wilson. Albert Bullard, the highly praised author of *Comrade Yetta*, joined the U.S. diplomatic staff in Moscow and, as Albert Rhys Williams tells in his memoirs, failed to understand Lenin and the working class character of the Revolution. George Allan England, who fought so mightily against the *Air Monopoly*, became a defender of American imperialism; the theoretician, Morris Hillquit, finally led the Right Wing into a betrayal of the working class.

Nonetheless there were those who did indeed hail the Bolshevik Revolution and remained staunch supporters of the USSR. Albert Rhys Williams was one example; so were Bishop Wm. Montgomery Brown, and the Rev. Eliot White; so were the artists, Ryan Walker, Maurice Becker, Bob Minor, Hugo Gellert, Lydia Gibson; so the writers Mike Gold, John Reed, and others; so the mass leaders, Wm. Z. Foster, C. E. Ruthenberg, Mother Bloor, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Alfred Wagenknecht, and others.

I think that the rank and file of those who studied Marxism, despite moments of uncertainty, remained in the growing socialist legions.



*About the Author*

Dr. Oakley C. Johnson was born in 1891. He received his doctor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1928 and thereafter for some thirty years taught in the Departments of English at Long Island University, CCNY, Talladega, Dillard and Tillotson College in Texas. He is the author of a biography of Charles E. Ruthenberg (1957) and of *Robert Owen in the United States* (AIMS-Humanities 1970).